

The Roots of Modern Egypt

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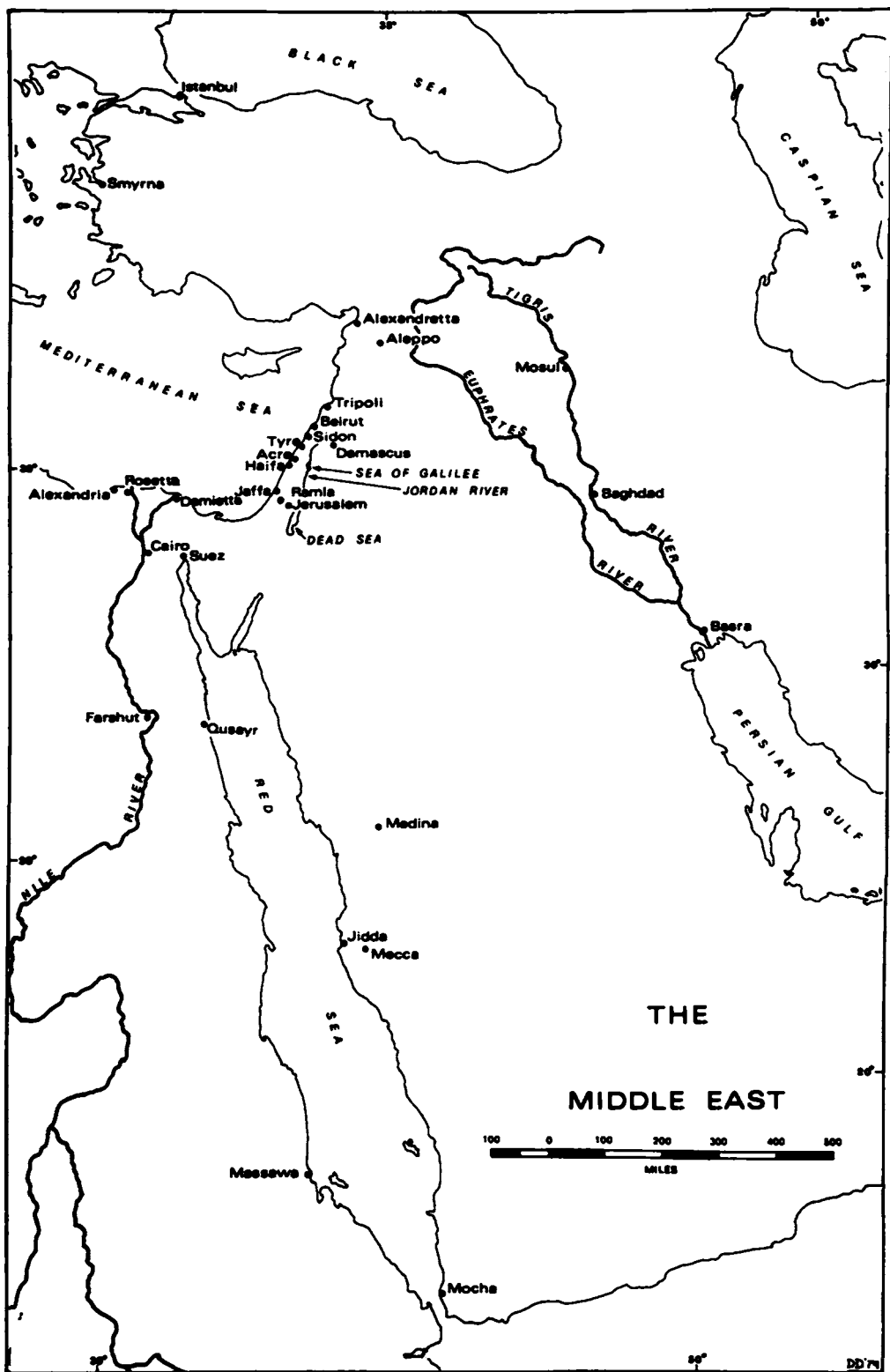
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No. 6

*The Roots of Modern Egypt. A Study of the Regimes of
'Ali Bey al-Kabir and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, 1760-1775*

Daniel Crecelius

STUDIES IN MIDDLE EASTERN HISTORY—NUMBER SIX



THE ROOTS OF MODERN EGYPT

A Study of the Regimes of 'Ali Bey al-Kabir
and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, 1760-1775

by

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***To the many friends
who helped me to
complete this study***

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Note on Transliteration

Authors of studies such as this one face the perennial problem of transliterating Arabic and Turkish terms and names into English. The problem is made more difficult by the lack of a single accepted system throughout the English-speaking scholarly world. In a case such as Egypt, an Arab province but part of a Turkish-dominated empire, where one finds documents written in Arabic but dealing with Ottoman terms, the choice of systems is further complicated. All too often, authors enunciate an elaborate system of transliteration, then make numerous exceptions to it to accomodate names (e.g., Mecca, Medina), titles (e.g., caliph, sultan), or terms (e.g., Moslem, Koran) that have entered the English vocabulary in a form not consistent with their system. Such elaborately enunciated systems are often unnecessary. The specialist is already familiar with the various methods of rendering Arabic and Turkish into English and will recognize the word in whatever form it is finally rendered. The general reader will not find any complicated system of much help, and will almost certainly not appreciate the difference between Muhammad and Muḥammad, *qadi* and *qādī*, or Ali and 'Alī.

The nature of the problem warranted the employment of two distinct systems of transliteration, somewhat modified, in this study. For the rendering of Turkish terms into English the accepted system of orthography has been used, but Arabic terms and names are presented without the accompanying diacritical marks, except in the case of the 'ayn (e.g., *shari'ah*) and the hamzah when it appears in the middle of words (e.g., al-Qur'an). A full system of transliterating Arabic, with the diacritical marks included, is employed in both the glossary and the bibliography.

Personal names of Arabic origin are rendered in the Turkish system when the individual is part of the Ottoman central government or more important to Ottoman history than to Egyptian history (e.g., Sultan Selim). The names of individuals prominent in Egyptian history, whatever their ethnic origins, are given in their familiar Arabic form (e.g., Muhammad 'Ali Pasha). Specifically Ottoman titles of office (e.g., *defterdar*) are given in the Turkish form, while others more familiar to Egypt (e.g., *qadi*, *amir al-hajj*) are given in the Arabic form. Arabic and Turkish titles and terms found in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* are, for the most part, rendered in their accepted English forms (e.g., fellah, vilayet).

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Introduction

This study was a natural outgrowth of my interest in the waqf of the mamluk amir Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab. While undertaking the necessary background research on the donor of that extensive endowment it became apparent that the hitherto obscure Muhammad Bey was of unappreciated significance in the line of mamluk amirs that governed Egypt in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was obvious that the career of Muhammad Bey could not be separated from that of his remarkable master, 'Ali Bey al-Kabir, whom he served and succeeded and whose policies he embraced. The policies of these two amirs represented a significant departure from the normal course of mamluk-Ottoman politics and briefly transformed the mamluk beylicate of Egypt from a collection of mutually hostile petty military factions into a united and powerful provincial regime. The two amirs effectively eliminated Ottoman control from the province and repositioned Egypt at the center of a newly emerging network of international relationships that embraced the lands of the eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea coasts, and Europe.

The same debilitating combination of factors that had overwhelmed the imperial bureaucracy in Istanbul during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was also responsible for the enfeeblement of the Ottoman provincial administrations. Neither the central government nor the provincial governors were able to stop the emergence throughout the empire of provincial regimes headed by local military leaders known in Anatolia as *derebeys* (lords of the valley) and in the Arab and European provinces as *a'yan* (notables). None of these regimes was as much a threat to the empire as the Qazdughli beylicate of Egypt while it was led by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey between 1760 and 1775.

To date, studies of the Middle East in the eighteenth century have

generally focused on the foreign relations of the Ottoman Empire, on the government of the empire in Istanbul, or on its administration in the provinces. These studies have confronted the reality of an empire in an advanced stage of decline. The rise of the a'yan in the provinces has frequently been viewed, therefore, as threatening from within an already weakened empire that was facing a far more serious set of challenges to its survival from hostile empires on its borders. In the eighteenth century in particular, a rejuvenated Persian dynasty threatened to occupy the province of Iraq, and a series of humiliating Ottoman military defeats in eastern Europe foretold even worse disasters that would overcome the empire in its persistent struggles with the expanding Hapsburg and Russian states. The choice of focus for the earlier studies of the Ottoman Middle East has itself been of some importance in shaping our impressions of the history of the Arab provinces during the centuries of Ottoman rule, for it has often predisposed us to view the emergence of semiautonomous provincial regimes as detrimental to the empire and as barriers to the programs that the central government sought to implement as part of the reform movement that lasted from the latter part of the eighteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century.

Until quite recently the eighteenth century has been portrayed as an uninterrupted period of political, economic, and cultural decline in the Middle East, the last and most serious century of Ottoman decline before the reform period of the nineteenth century. It has also been assumed that the Ottoman loss of control over the provincial administrations exacerbated the problems of the central government and adversely affected the societies and economies of the provinces as the regular pattern of Ottoman administration and the rule of (Ottoman) law gave way to the personal and often unrestrained despotism of individual provincial leaders. The reform period of the *tanzimat* which followed in the nineteenth century has been seen as a partly successful attempt to arrest this decline and reinvigorate the Ottoman bureaucratic and military structures. One of the more obvious political results of this reform period was a tightening of central control over most of the provinces that had gained a degree of autonomy during the previous period of receding Ottoman power.

This interpretation is valid and can be defended easily enough if one's focus is the Ottoman Empire or if one adopts the perspective of the central government in Istanbul, but this approach usually predisposes one to condemn those developments which strengthened the

provinces at the expense of the central government. It has also frequently meant that the signs of positive change in the provinces have been interpreted from the imperial perspective as but further proof of declining Ottoman power or of the decay of Ottoman institutions. The positive aspects of change in the Ottoman provinces in the eighteenth century have therefore frequently been overlooked and remain unappreciated.

While the loosening of Ottoman control in the provinces can indeed be considered a net loss for the central government in Istanbul, the corresponding emergence of regimes dominated by local political elites need not necessarily be seen as a loss to the provinces themselves. The enfeeblement of the Ottoman provincial garrisons, the emergence of local military elites that initiated policies that strengthened the province at the expense of the center, the redirection of provincial revenues from the central treasury to projects that benefited the province, the increase of direct trade with Europe, these and other trends can be seen as signs of positive growth in the provinces. Unfortunately, not enough studies of individual provinces in the eighteenth century have appeared to demonstrate sufficiently the positive aspects of change during this period of declining Ottoman power. The few recent studies of individual provinces that have focused on these transformations clearly demonstrate the positive benefit the provinces derived from these developments in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The picture of Palestine that emerges from Amnon Cohen's *Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: 1973) is of a province that experienced significant economic growth and social change under the semiautonomous, but tyrannical, regimes of Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar and Ahmad Jazzar Pasha. Their policies clearly helped to release the latent economic potential of the region. A similar picture of intellectual ferment and economic growth emerges from Peter Gran's *Islamic Roots of Capitalism, Egypt: 1760-1840* (Austin and London: 1979). The present study, too, views the reemergence of an autonomous mamluk beylicate in Egypt as a powerful stimulus for the reawakening of Egyptian regional ambitions and a motive force for change in the economy, particularly in the foreign trade sector. This is not to say that all change was of a positive nature. The growth of Egypt's foreign trade in the second half of the eighteenth century is in sharp contrast with the general disruption of the agricultural sector reported in 'Abd al-

Rahim's *al-Rif al-Misri fi al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashar* (Cairo: 1974).

Following their incursion into the Arab provinces in the early sixteenth century the Ottomans imposed upon these newly conquered territories an effective administration whose task it was to regularize the Ottoman domination, to manipulate the human and material resources of the province for the benefit of the central government, and to insure the continuity of Islamic cultural traditions through the support of religious institutions and religious groups. Seen from the Ottoman perspective, one of the most successful achievements of their policy was the manner in which these administrations, each organized around a governor whose authority did not extend beyond the administrative boundaries of his governorate, broke down the historical political and economic unity of the Arab provinces. The Syrian and Palestinian regions, for instance, were divided into several smaller administrative units, none of which had the economic or military potential to challenge Ottoman control before the eighteenth century or to reunite the region. These territories were in fact unable to break loose from the Ottoman grip until the twentieth century when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in the aftermath of World War I.

Because of Egypt's unique geographic setting and economic potential, the Ottomans maintained a single administration for this province, but Egypt's natural ties to Palestine and Syria were effectively severed and, notwithstanding the annual pilgrim caravan the Egyptian regime was responsible for sending to the holy cities of the Hijaz, her interests were largely confined within her own natural borders for more than two and one half centuries of Ottoman rule. Palestine, frequently the land bridge linking Egypt and Syria in one political union, acted under Ottoman administration as an effective barrier to the expansion of Egyptian interests northward. It is therefore possible to see in the policies of such eighteenth - century provincial leaders as 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey of Egypt and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar and Ahmad Jazzar Pasha of Palestine a re-assertion of natural regional political and economic interests, interests that had been artificially constrained during the earlier centuries of Ottoman domination.

In following their own selfish ambitions, each of the provincial leaders mentioned promoted the historical interests of the regions they governed. Each sought to extend his political influence into neighboring provinces, something the Ottoman administration had so far effectively curtailed, and each sought to recreate the pattern of

economic relations with the neighboring provinces that would be more advantageous to the province than to the central government which had rearranged these relations to satisfy its own economic and political objectives in the Arab provinces. These provincial leaders also raised military forces that overwhelmed the garrisons available to the Ottoman governors and sought to reestablish direct links with the European trading nations whose activities in the provinces had been severely restricted by the Ottomans as a means of shielding their Arab provinces from European political penetration. The Qazdughli amirs, for instance, made a particular, though unsuccessful, effort to reopen the Red Sea to European shipping and generally sought to establish closer political and economic contacts with the European commercial states.

The Ottoman conquests of the sixteenth century had not eliminated the military elites in the Arab provinces, but had effectively suppressed them for several centuries. In Egypt the Ottomans utilized mamluk manpower and expertise in the military and bureaucratic administrations they established in that province. As background for the later discussion of the manner in which the Qazdughli beylicate penetrated the administration, chapter one reviews briefly the structure of the Ottoman administration in Egypt and surveys the extent to which mamluks were incorporated into that structure.

The Ottomans sustained their power in each of their provinces through the presence of a military garrison commanded by the governor. By the ~~seventeenth~~ century many of these garrisons throughout the empire, like the one in Egypt, had been transformed into unreliable, even rebellious, military factions that the governor had difficulty to control. By the eighteenth century the units in Egypt had become the base for cliques of Ottoman officers or mamluk leaders who used the preponderant military power of the corps to dominate the political life of the province. Struggles for the control of the higher positions within the corps and the lucrative tax farms over which the corps had gained control frequently erupted into armed conflict between rival factions. To these conflicts the Ottoman governors had become mere spectators.

Chapter two briefly traces the history of the Qazdughliyah, the mamluk faction that wrested control of the province from the Ottomans and directed the political life of Egypt for most of the eighteenth century, from its modest origins in the seventeenth century to its emergence under 'Ali Bey as the dominant political faction in Egypt. This chapter

deals with 'Ali Bey's elimination of his many rivals, Ottoman governors, bedouin shaykhs, officers of the Ottoman military units, and the heads of other mamluk factions, and explains how 'Ali Bey transformed the elaborate Ottoman administration in Egypt into a virtually autonomous mamluk regime by installing his personal mamluks in the key offices of the military units and the administration.

For most of the eighteenth century neither the imperial bureaucracy in Istanbul nor its governors in Cairo had been able to halt the growing penetration by mamluks and their clients of the provincial administration, particularly as tax farmers. Once the Ottoman garrison had been neutralized the central government had few means to contain the further ambitions of provincial a'yan like 'Ali Bey, who accelerated significantly the redirection of state lands and revenues from the central treasury to his own personal use. A military response from the Ottomans to the challenge posed by provincial leaders became increasingly difficult as the century progressed, owing largely to the enfeeblement of the Ottoman military units themselves and to the deteriorating political environment in which the Ottomans were forced to maneuver. For instance, at the time that 'Ali Bey consolidated his position in Egypt the attention and resources of the Ottoman central government were diverted from the Arab provinces by a disastrous war the empire was then waging against the Russians. This war, which stretched from 1768 to 1774, overlaps the period of 'Ali Bey's rebellion of 1769-1773 and the mamluk campaigns in Arabia, Palestine and Syria of 1770, 1771, and 1775. It was during this period while the Ottomans were unable to commit troops to contain the aspirations of such provincial leaders as 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar that the Qazdughli faction succeeded in wresting complete control of Egypt from the Ottoman authorities. So thoroughly had 'Ali Bey eliminated the Ottoman presence from Egypt that not even the military expedition of 1786 could regain control of the province for the central government. As soon as the expeditionary force had to be withdrawn for service elsewhere the province reverted to Qazdughli control. Egypt remained firmly in Qazdughli hands until the mamluk regime itself was shattered by the French occupation of 1798-1801.

'Ali Bey, ever the opportunist, took advantage of the Ottoman Empire's general weakness and its distraction during the Russian war to initiate an audacious plan to recreate the medieval mamluk empire around an Egyptian base. Chapter three reviews the elaboration of this scheme and follows the progress of his armies in Upper Egypt, the

Hijaz, Palestine, and Syria. It also deals with his revolt against the sultan, his alliance with Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar, his attempt to open the port of Suez to European shipping, the commercial and military links he attempted to forge with the European states, and the first Syrian campaign that culminated in the brief occupation of Damascus by Muhammad Bey in June, 1771. Muhammad Bey's unexplained withdrawal from Damascus dramatically changed the course of 'Ali Bey's fortunes, which to that point had been eminently successful, for a personal conflict that broke out between the two mamluks subsequent to Muhammad Bey's abandonment of his conquest rapidly evolved into a civil war that cost 'Ali Bey his province and his life. The last part of chapter three follows the course of the personal conflict between 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey. It relates the events of Muhammad Bey's expulsion from Cairo in January, 1772, his successful return and 'Ali Bey's inglorious escape to Palestinian refuge with Shaykh Dahir in April, 1772, the struggle that then ensued between the two camps for control of southern Palestine, and 'Ali Bey's defeat and death in May, 1773, in a premature attempt to regain control of the province that was to have been the base for his revived mamluk empire.

Although it was frequently unable to muster a military response to the challenge posed by the emergence of rebellious provincial leaders in the eighteenth century, the Ottoman central government had developed alternate means of extracting from its provinces the necessary revenues, manpower, or products its administrations had originally been established to obtain. Some of these methods are mentioned in this study as they pertain to the Egyptian case. The central government also developed devious means of instigating rivalry among competing factions within a single province or between leaders of neighboring provinces to weaken or bring down a leader who failed to meet his obligations to the empire. Time and again throughout the eighteenth century one can point to Ottoman political maneuvering as the major factor in the collapse of a provincial regime. 'Ali Bey had himself experienced the ability of a weakened Ottoman administration to determine the victor in the interminable internal feuds that kept the mamluk beylicate from realizing its political potential, for he had himself been brought down by an Ottoman maneuver in 1766 and then was rehabilitated the following year through the intervention of the Ottoman governor. The inability of such rebellious leaders as Shaykh Dahir or 'Ali Bey to establish permanently autonomous regimes in the

period of greatest Ottoman weakness bears convincing testimony to the skill of Ottoman statecraft and to the resilience of the Ottoman Empire in being able to obtain revenues and products from provinces over which it had had to relinquish military control during the course of the eighteenth century.

Few of the provincial regimes that emerged in the eighteenth century posed as serious a challenge to Ottoman statecraft as the Qazdughli beylicate, for few of the Ottoman provinces had the inherent economic and political potential to throw off Ottoman suzerainty entirely and survive as independent political units. In their drive for autonomy 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey could draw on unique Egyptian strengths, including a national consciousness and a long historical experience as the center of great empires, a strong agricultural and commercial base, and a military tradition among her ruling (mamluk) classes. 'Ali Bey's successful transformation of the Qazdughliyah from a minor political faction into a powerful provincial regime created a sudden and seemingly insatiable demand on the part of the regime for increased revenues. The considerable expense of raising his own armies, not massive by the standards of the empire but large by provincial standards, and of fighting foreign wars forced 'Ali Bey to ignore both law and custom in his search for the revenues his regime now required.

Chapter four assesses the manner and extent of the Qazdughli penetration of the Ottoman administration in Egypt and demonstrates how 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey sought to obtain from traditional sources the sums necessary to sustain their drive for autonomy. The discussion focuses on the revenues that the two amirs diverted from the treasury and upon the income they derived from the system of tax farming (*iltizams*), pious foundations (*awqaf*), and extortion. The abuse of these systems by the Qazdughli amirs had significant effects upon traditional society: virtually all Ottoman and mamluk political rivals were eliminated by 'Ali Bey's attacks upon them and by his usurpation of their private wealth; the social equilibrium of the countryside was disrupted by the excessive tax burdens imposed upon the agricultural community, on both peasants and tax farmers; the religious institutions and the groups supported by them were adversely affected by the frequent seizure of revenues set aside for their support; and the intensified use of extortion ruined several commercial groups, most notably the Jews and the European merchant communities resident in Egypt, and drew the Qazdughli beylicate into a broader set

of economic and political relations with the European states.

Chapter five returns to the topic of Qazdughli foreign policy, this time reviewing Muhammad Bey's relations with the Ottoman Empire and the European states. It explores Muhammad Bey's efforts to develop Egypt's foreign trade in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and follows the struggle between Muhammad Bey and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar which drew Muhammad Bey back to Palestine in 1775 where he defeated Dahir but died unexpectedly of a sudden illness at the moment of his greatest triumph.

Chapter six reviews both the major achievements and failures of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey in the light of the later achievements of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha.

The Military and Administrative Organization of Ottoman Egypt

Situated in the northeast corner of the African continent facing the great land mass of southwest Asia, Egypt is one of the most strategic crossroads on earth. A unique geographic setting and a salubrious climate have also made it one of the most important provinces of the eastern Mediterranean basin. Protected on the east and west by deserts and tied to the sparsely settled south only by the narrow valley of the Nile River, the country has seldom had to fear attack by neighbors from those directions. The deserts protected it, but did not prevent it from reaching out over long sea and land routes to distant regions of the world. The Red Sea provided a natural waterway through which much of the trade of Asia passed on its way to Mediterranean markets and offered a relatively safe means of communication with the west Arabian coast, and long caravan routes connected it to a vast sub-Saharan region. Culturally, however, the deserts have tended to isolate Egypt, making it more a part of the Mediterranean and southwest Asian worlds than of the African world south of the Sahara.

Although Egypt is part of the African continent, its history has more often been determined by forces and states centered in Europe or southwest Asia, for to the north of Cairo the Nile fans out into a broad plain that give easy access to the Mediterranean Sea and, by a desert route across the Sinai peninsula, to the Levant coast. Egypt's major economic, political, and cultural contacts with the world beyond its borders were therefore usually directed northward into the Mediterranean and southwest Asia. During the course of its long history Egypt has been a part of empires centered in such distant capitals as Rome, Athens, Constantinople, Damascus, Baghdad, and London, but only once, during the 25th Dynasty, has it ever been dominated by an African kingdom to the south.

Egypt's geographic setting has often allowed it to dominate surrounding regions or made it the object of unwanted foreign attention, but the region has an intrinsic value of its own totally unrelated to its international importance as a crossroads between Europe and Asia or between southwest Asia and Africa. A fortunate combination of climate and soil have made it one of the most productive agricultural provinces of the Mediterranean basin. The annual Nile flood brought sufficient water for the inhabitants of the valley and deposited a new layer of rich alluvial silt which Egypt's industrious farmers worked in partnership with the benevolent Egyptian sun to bring forth sufficient crops to make it a major granary for the Mediterranean world.

The preponderant importance of Egypt's northern links has sometimes obscured the lesser, but not insignificant, ties it maintained with both the African continent and the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula.¹ The pattern of Egypt's foreign relations and the geographic realities of its natural setting have combined to create for it a viable political and economic subsystem that extends beyond the natural geographic boundaries of the eastern Mediterranean basin. This subsystem is centered in lower Egypt and stretches north-eastward into Palestine and Syria, southeastward along the coasts of the Red Sea, and southward into the upper Nile valley. The power of the Mamluk sultanate of Cairo in fact embraced these regions when the Ottomans invaded the Arab world in 1516-1517. Following their victory over the Mamluk kingdom the Ottomans reorganized these territories on the basis of their own needs and considerations and proceeded to establish separate administrations in Egypt and Syria. For the entire period that these two provinces remained part of the Ottoman Empire their own natural interests remained secondary to Ottoman imperial considerations.

Throughout its long and glorious history Egypt remained firmly wedded to the Mediterranean world by an intricately woven pattern of geographic, cultural, economic, and political relationships, but it also

1. These ties are masterfully explored in two recent publications. André Raymond's *Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIII^e siècle* (Damascus: 1973), I, 107-157, reveals the importance of Egypt's Red Sea trade in the eighteenth century. Egypt's African trade is explored in Terence Walz, *Trade between Egypt and Bilād as-Sūdān: 1700-1820* (Cairo: 1978). The best study of French trade with Egypt in the eighteenth century remains Paul Masson's *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1911). The commerce between Venice and Egypt is dealt with in Eugenio Musatti's *Del commercio di Venezia con l'Egitto* (Venice: 1870).

maintained a lesser set of relationships, mainly economic, with a vast African hinterland and with an Asian world whose trade to the Mediterranean basin was funneled through the Red Sea and across the delta region. Over long caravan tracks the goods, but not the troops of *bilad al-Sudan* (land of the blacks) to the south and *bilad al-Takrur*, a sub-Saharan region roughly defined as extending from the kingdom of Dar Fur to the Atlantic Ocean, found their way to Egyptian markets. While the African trade never accounted for more than an insignificant proportion of Egypt's total trade, the Red Sea route was to assume major importance for Egypt in the eighteenth century (see Table 1).

Table 1. Egypt's Foreign Trade in 1783 (in *nisf fidḍah*).

	Imports	Exports	Total
Ottoman Empire (including Syria)	305,791,869	431,275,125	737,066,994
Jidda	382,500,000	191,250,000	573,750,000
Europe	124,453,719	111,144,334	235,598,053
North Africa	21,705,617	41,140,000	62,845,617
Dar Fur and Sinnar	37,403,535	14,134,875	51,538,410
Total	871,854,740	788,944,334	1,660,799,074

Source: Terence Walz, *Trade between Egypt and Bilād as-Sūdān: 1700-1820* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire, 1978), p. 62, citing Jean-Baptiste Trécourt, *Memories sur l'Égypte* (Cairo: Société Royale de Géographie d'Égypte), "Tableau général du commerce et de la navigation de l'Égypte," between pages 24 and 25.

From its conquest by Sultan Selim I in 1517 until it was declared a British protectorate in 1914 the flag of the Ottoman Empire flew over Egypt as a symbol of Ottoman sovereignty and of Egypt's own frustrated national ambitions. The sudden incursion of the Ottomans into the Arab world in 1516-1517 had brought to an end the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria and fundamentally transformed the character and interests of the Ottoman Empire itself. For the next two and one half centuries, while its natural interests in its surrounding territories were superseded by Ottoman imperial considerations, Egypt nevertheless remained the base from which Ottoman power radiated to most of these same regions of historical Egyptian interest.

Within months of Selim's conquest of Syria and Egypt the ruler of Mecca submitted to the new power in his border regions. In assuming responsibility for the security and well-being of the Hijaz, a responsibility previously held by the Mamluk sultans of Cairo, the Ottoman

sultan himself was successor to many of the responsibilities and dignities of the Arab caliphs. Among the illustrious titles to which he could now rightfully lay claim was that of *amir al-haramayn* (commander of the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina).

At the same time that the Ottomans were driving southward into the Arab world the Portuguese made a dramatic appearance along the east African and Arabian coasts. Their depredations against Muslim shipping and their assault upon Muslim strongholds along these shores drew the Ottomans even further from their center in the eastern Mediterranean basin. In a partial effort to check the Portuguese advance and preserve Muslim control of the lucrative Asian trade, the Ottomans occupied Yemen in 1538 and established themselves on the east African coast at Massawa in 1557. As Ottoman naval power continued to expand into the Indian Ocean the ruler of Mombasa, far down the African coast, recognized Ottoman suzerainty in 1585, but the Europeans counterattacked in force and drove the Ottomans back into the Red Sea. Much of the Asian trade was diverted by the Portuguese and other European nations directly to Europe, but the Ottomans were eventually able to secure the Red Sea and preserve a diminished flow of Asian goods to the eastern Mediterranean. European pirates and merchant vessels might enter the Red Sea on occasion, but the Ottomans were able to maintain a general ban on European shipping in all but the extreme southern portions of that sea until the latter part of the eighteenth century. The security of the Ottoman southern borderlands, including the approaches to Mecca and Medina, was thus assured by Ottoman control of Egypt and the Red Sea.

As long as it remained subservient to Ottoman rule Egypt's military and economic value to the Ottoman Empire was enormous. Egypt's several ports, Alexandria, Damietta, and Rosetta facing the Mediterranean and Suez and Qusayr on the Red Sea, gave the Ottomans easy access to the African and Asian worlds beyond the Mediterranean basin. The important trade routes of Asia and east Africa delivered their products to the Mediterranean world through these same ports. It was from Egypt that the holy cities of Mecca and Medina were defended and provisioned and the vital trade routes to Africa and Asia protected. Suez remained the main base for Ottoman naval operations in the Red Sea and a major departure point for those pilgrims from northern Africa who chose the sea route to their holy land, while Alexandria, Damietta, and Rosetta remained key links with Europe and the eastern Mediterranean.

Continued Ottoman military expansion into the western Mediterranean and eastern Europe in the sixteenth century pushed the borders with the hostile Christian world far from the Ottoman heartland in the eastern Mediterranean. Situated near the very center of this Ottoman world, Egypt enjoyed security from external attack until the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hapsburg military successes in the western Mediterranean and in eastern Europe and repeated Persian incursions into Iraq could not directly threaten the security of Egypt, but Ottoman defeats in the borderlands did lead eventually to the loosening of central control in many of the safe interior provinces such as Egypt. The result was the emergence throughout the empire during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of local elites, called a'yan. Egypt's own reemergence as a semiautonomous power in the eastern Mediterranean and its attempt to regain control over the Red Sea and Levant coasts after two and one half centuries of submission to Ottoman rule are directly related to the recrudescence of a powerful mamluk regime in Egypt. It is this regime that is the subject of this study.

Egypt's geopolitical importance to the empire was significant, but it should not overshadow its equally impressive economic value to the Ottoman state. Despite the heavy costs of supporting an extensive Ottoman administration and military garrison, despite the provisions and monies that it diverted to the holy cities, despite the military expenses of defending the valley against bedouins and the Red Sea region against infidel merchants and warships, Egypt was still able to produce a sizable amount of annual revenue and grains for the Ottoman central treasury in Istanbul. Clearly, Egypt was one of the more important of all Ottoman provinces. To insure these benefits for the empire successive sultans sought to maintain a capable military garrison and an efficient bureaucracy in this strategic province.

Sultan Selim I laid the foundation of Ottoman administration in Egypt, but his successor, Suleiman al-Qanuni (the Lawgiver), is credited with giving the Ottoman regime there its basic structure, a structure that was to be preserved with only minor changes into the nineteenth century. The regime established by the Ottoman sultans in the sixteenth century was actually a fusion of Ottoman and mamluk elements. Mamluk troops, the remnants of the defeated mamluk armies of Syria and Egypt, were assigned to Ottoman military units or formed into separate corps of their own which were used as auxiliary troops by the Ottoman military commanders. Mamluk officials were

also absorbed into the new Ottoman administration to provide expertise and continuity for the new regime.

Sultan Selim had left Kha'ir Bey, the former mamluk governor of Aleppo, as governor of Egypt when he withdrew to Istanbul shortly after his conquest. Kha'ir Bey, who had deserted his mamluk companions to join Selim's forces in their campaign in Syria in 1516, sought to unite the Ottoman forces Selim left in Egypt with remnants of the defeated mamluk armies who would transfer their allegiance to the new regime. He used these mamluks as auxiliary troops to supplement the Ottoman forces left at his disposal and as top administrators in the new regime. The induction of mamluk officials and troops continued under the second governor, Ahmad Pasha, but Ahmad Pasha led a mamluk revolt against Ottoman rule in 1523-1524, and Egypt had to be reconquered by yet another Ottoman army, this one led by the Grand Vizir Ibrahim Pasha. Under the auspices of Sultan Suleiman a code of regulations, or *qanunname*, was issued in 1524 which reorganized the Ottoman regime in Egypt. The central government was wary, following the revolt of Ahmad Pasha, of placing too much administrative and military power in the hands of its governors and therefore created an elaborate system of military and bureaucratic checks and balances to curtail the ambitions of future governors.²

The governor remained the chief executive officer of the sultan in the vilayet (province). Although he held the military rank of pasha and was in nominal command of the garrison forces of Egypt, his control of the troops was usually tenuous. The governor was chosen by the Imperial Divan (council) in Istanbul from a pool of high-ranking vizirs of the empire. He executed the orders sent to him by the imperial Divan, issued whatever supplementary decrees were necessary to permit him to administer the province, and supervised the various functionaries who comprised the Ottoman regime in Egypt. Two of his

2. The bureaucratic structure of Ottoman Egypt is meticulously explained in the early works of Stanford J. Shaw. See in particular *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt: 1517-1798* (Princeton, N.J.: 1962) (hereafter cited as *Organization*); the notes to the edition and translation Shaw made to the manuscript of Huseyn Efendi, which he entitled *Ottoman Egypt in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1966) (hereafter cited as *French Revolution*); and the notes to the edition and translation Shaw made of Ahmad Jazzar Pasha's manuscript, which he entitled *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century: The Nizāmnāme-i Mişir of Cezzār Ahmed Pasha* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1962) (hereafter cited as *Nizāmnāme-i Mişir*). See also Layla 'Abd al-Latīf Aḥmad, "Al-Idārah fī Mişir fī al-'Asr al-'Uthmānī" (Ph.D. diss., 'Ayn Shams University, Cairo, 1975).

more difficult functions were first to maintain discipline over the garrison troops and then to check the military ambitions of the mamluk leaders. The significance of Egypt to the Ottoman Empire can be deduced from the importance of the vizirs sent to govern that province. Subsequent to their tenure in Egypt many governors were advanced through a hierarchy of important positions that led to a place on the Imperial Divan itself, sometimes as Grand Vizir. At other times governors of Egypt were recruited from the Imperial Divan, especially when it was necessary to replace a governor in order to reimpose order on the bureaucracy and bring discipline to the military units stationed there. The governor executed his orders through the Divan of Egypt, a council composed of the highest religious, administrative, and military officials of the Ottoman regime in Egypt.

The chief judicial official in the province was the *qadi al-quda*, chief judge. He was selected from a pool of learned scholars by the authorities in Istanbul and sent to administer the system of Ottoman courts in Egypt. The judgeship of Egypt, like the governorship, was part of a hierarchical system of positions that would eventually lead the holder back to Istanbul where he would find service in one of the major collegiate mosques (madrasahs) of the capital or possibly even obtain the position of Shaykh al-Islam, chief judge of the Ottoman Empire, and claim a place on the Imperial Divan. Among the duties of the chief judge in Egypt was the monitoring of the activities of the governor. He insured that the orders sent to the governor from Istanbul were properly executed and kept the Imperial Divan apprised of the governor's conduct. A strong protest to the Imperial Divan by him complaining of the governor's misdeeds could even result in the removal of the governor by the sultan.

The important financial administration of Egypt was supervised by the defterdar, chief treasurer, whose principal executive officer was the *ruznamji*. In general, the treasurer had his hand on the entire economy of Egypt, for he supervised the vast and complicated system of urban and agricultural tax farms, collected the revenues of this system, and paid the costs of the entire Ottoman administration in Egypt from the central treasury in Cairo. In essence, he shared with the governor the primary function of insuring an annual surplus of income over expenditures for the regime in Egypt. This important position went to a mamluk official who held the rank of *sanjaq bey*. More is said about this position in the discussion of the mamluk system that follows.

In theory, the Ottoman Empire had been formed by conquest, so the entire state was the imperial possession of the sultan. He chose, however, to allocate to others his sovereign right to administer individual units and collect the taxes from these units, called *muqata'at* (sing. *muqata'ah*). The assignment of administrative-tax units to individuals who were then obliged to collect the taxes from them and to provide military or administrative services to the empire was the typical form used throughout the empire. The tax farm was not inheritable, but remained the sultan's to assign, usually on an annual basis. Three basic types of tax farm, each meeting a different need of the government, were employed in the Ottoman Empire.³

The *timar* was a type of tax farm widely used throughout the empire to meet the military and administrative needs of the central government in the provinces. The holder of the *timar* was assigned revenues from a particular region in return for his performance of specified military and administrative services, such as the maintenance of the defense of a particular castle or harbor, or the equipping of a specified number of troops for use by the empire. He would pay for these obligations from the revenues collected from his *timar*. Under this system the holder was responsible only for services and did not have to forward any part of the taxes he collected to the government. He kept for himself whatever surplus there was. All too often the central government found these provincial leaders hard to control, for they had at their disposal a tax base and troops. The expansion of the *timar* system through the Asiatic and European provinces of the empire meant that an ever larger range of the empire's military and administrative functions in the provinces was being performed by leaders having a great deal of local leverage to use against the central government. The spread of this system is often cited as a factor in the weakening of the central government, for the revenues and produce of these *timars*, being entirely absorbed in the provinces to support local military units, were no longer available for use by the central government.

A second type of tax farm, the *emanet*, was given to an *emin*, or trustee, who supervised the revenue-producing activity assigned to him in return for a stipulated salary paid from the central treasury. He delivered the entire income of the *emanet*, minus expenses, to the central treasury. While this system delivered the greater bulk of the

3. See Shaw, *Organization*, 26-33.

revenues to the central treasury, it left the difficult problems of defense and administration to the central government.

The third type of tax farm employed in the empire, the *iltizam*, combined characteristics of the other two. The holder of the *iltizam*, the *multazim*, met the various expenses of maintaining the productivity of his *iltizam* and its administration from the revenues he collected, delivered a specified sum (the price of his *iltizam*) to the treasury, and kept whatever surplus there was for himself. Virtually the entire province of Egypt was organized as one vast *iltizam*, which was then subdivided into smaller units. In a sense, the governor can be viewed as the chief *multazim* in Egypt. He in turn subdivided his tax farm to insure the performance of all the necessary functions of defense, maintenance, administration, and the like. The annual sum he was obliged to forward to Istanbul, called the *irsaliyah khazinah*, or remittance, represented the surplus of income over expenditures for the province as a whole after all the expenditures had been deducted from the total income of the *iltizam* system. Although the *timar* was used only sparingly in Egypt, it should be noted that the Ottoman and mamluk military corps used the *iltizam* in much the same way as the *timar* to support their independent aspirations. As long as the system continued to produce a surplus which was forwarded to Istanbul the central government did little to check the growing dominance that the military units achieved over the administrative system it had established in Egypt. It was only in the late eighteenth century when a mamluk regime withheld the annual remittance that the Ottomans were finally provoked to send a military expedition to retake control of the province.

The original force with which Selim I conquered Syria and Egypt was composed of several types of soldiery and was organized into distinct, often competing, military units. Selim left elements of four units under the overall command of Kha'ir Bey, who added units composed of troops from the defeated mamluk armies of Syria and Egypt to his garrison. From the very beginning of Ottoman rule the governor of Egypt found it necessary to balance the military and political strength of one unit or group of units against another in an effort to preserve his own position and authority within the system established by Selim and Suleiman. The military units that formed the garrison of Egypt seldom acted in concert during peacetime and were often reluctant to accept the authority of their pasha. Rather, they frequently quarreled among themselves, competed for control of the more lucrative *iltizams*, and

through their general unruliness posed a threat to both the Ottoman governor and to the general populace. The qanunname had deliberately established a system of checks and balances, but the central government tried throughout the next several centuries to place in the hands of the governor sufficient military strength to control the seven units (*ojaqat*, sing. *ojaq*) into which the garrison troops of Egypt were divided. ⁴

The most important military unit that Selim I had left to garrison Egypt was the Janissary corps. This infantry unit occupied the citadel, which served as the residence of the governor and the seat of the divan of Egypt, guarded the city of Cairo and its approaches, and acted as a general police force for the capital and other large Egyptian towns. Egyptians referred to this unit as the *Mustahfizan*, guardians, a popular term by which they are also identified in waqf documents and religious court registers in Egypt. Their commander, the agha, acted as a chief of Cairo police, commander of the citadel, and leader of the army. Each Ottoman corps in Egypt was, in fact, commanded by an agha, whose chief executive officer was a *kathhuda*. A council of elders, known as the *ikhtiyariyah*, selected from the senior officer ranks of each corps, guided the affairs of the corps, and settled disputes among and between men of the various units.

The 'Azaban, or bachelors, another infantry unit, performed many of the same functions as the *Mustahfizan*. They guarded the gates of the citadel and the approaches to Cairo and other large towns, and patrolled on Nile boats. They were fewer and received less pay than the *Mustahfizan*, were often in conflict with them, but together with them dominated the other corps and many of the more lucrative *iltizams*.

The *Mustahfizan* and 'Azaban were joined by the *Çavuşan*, a third infantry corps formed in 1524 of mamluks who promised their loyalty to the new regime following the collapse of Ahmad Pasha's revolt. The *Çavuşan* acted as the personal troops of the governor and performed the function of carrying decrees to their destination. To maintain discipline among the garrison troops, a constant problem for the governor, officers of the various units were appointed from among these loyal *Çavuşan* troops.

4. The formation, organization and revenues of the various Ottoman military corps in Egypt are dealt with by Shaw, *ibid.*, 189-215, and Shaw, *French Revolution*, 82-95.

The cavalry corps was also split into several units. Sultan Selim had left units of the Tufenkciyan (riflemen) and Gönüllüyan (volunteers, corrupted by Egyptians to Gumilyan, cameleers) to patrol the countryside and keep the bedouins in check. They also acted as the troops of the provincial administrators. A special corps of Circassian cavalry, aptly called Çerakise (Circassians), was formed in 1556 from remnants of the previous mamluk regime and performed functions similar to those performed by the other two cavalry units.

Another attempt at strengthening the hand of the governor was made in 1554 when the Muteferriqah corps was formed by combining mamluks in the service of the governor with troops of the Muteferriqah corps sent from Istanbul. They became the personal troops of the governor and permitted him to maintain his authority among the military units until the seventeenth century, when their influence was blunted by the Mustahfizan and 'Azaban, who came to dominate the other corps (table 2). The figures show the number of persons drawing salaries from the corps, and do not necessarily represent their fighting strength, but they are nevertheless instructive in evaluating the relative strength of the individual units.

Table 2. Comparative Strength of the Seven Ottoman Military Corps in Egypt between 1664 and 1797.

	1664	1709	1710	1717	1797
Mustahfizan	4,899	5,263	5,239	5,106	6,893
'Azaban	1,356	3,241	3,229	3,778	3,274
Muteferriqah	3,265	1,485	1,544	1,680	1,519
Çavuşan	1,259	1,641	1,683	2,293	2,415
Gönüllüyan	1,154	1,236	1,256	1,321	2,037
Tufenkciyan	907	1,030	1,049	945	1,100
Çerakise	833	891	984	900	1,071
Total	13,673	14,787	14,984	16,023	18,309

Source: Layla 'Abd al-Latif Ahmad, "Al-Idarah fi Misr fi al-'Asr al-'Uthmani," Ph.D. diss. 'Ayn Shams University, Cairo, 1975, p. 168.

The Mustahfizan and 'Azaban between them dominated the political life of the capital until the eighteenth century, when they were absorbed into the mamluk military structure. Their transformation from a standing garrison force loyal to the governor to adjunct units of the mamluk military system began with the series of financial crises

that plagued Egypt in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵ These crises, which led to successive devaluations of the currency and to a decline in the real wages of the men of the corps, sparked several serious revolts by the troops and eventually influenced many of them, particularly those of the lower ranks, to find a livelihood among the artisan and merchant groups in the cities. This was the first step toward their assimilation into local society. During the seventeenth century mamluks also gained appointment to the ojaqs. These slave troops, who often claimed important positions within the officer ranks, further diffused the loyalty of the standing corps and tied the units even more intimately to local political factions. Ultimately, the ojaqs would be reduced almost completely to mamluk authority. The once effective military units were enfeebled even further during the eighteenth century when well-placed local inhabitants, including merchants and artisans, were able to buy their way onto the registers of the corps. They were able to claim a salary from the government for their "service," but in no way increased the fighting capacity of the corps. Where once the ojaqs had been a major instrument for the exercise of Ottoman authority in Egypt, by the early eighteenth century they had become the instruments of mamluk power and the base for political gangs that terrorized the governor and the local populace in demanding control over an ever expanding range of Egypt's revenue system.

Paralleling the official military structure that the Ottomans established in Egypt was an independent mamluk military structure, the remnant of the mamluk regime defeated by the Ottoman rulers Selim I and Suleiman al-Qanuni in the early sixteenth century. Defeated mamluks who had not fled and who were willing to transfer their loyalty to the Ottoman victors were enrolled in special military corps and retained by the Ottoman governors as supplementary troops to perform important military and administrative functions for the new Ottoman regime. Until virtually the end of the sixteenth century these mamluk military contingents remained loyal to the Ottoman governors and were used by the governors to put down revolts of the established ojaqs.

Although the genealogical line between the "classical" Mamluk sultanate of the years 1250-1517 and the revived mamluk beylicate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is obscure, it is safe to

5. These crises are dealt with by Raymond, *Artisans et commerçants au Caire*, I, 83-106.

conclude that the Ottoman conquest had not extirpated the mamluk system in Egypt, but only temporarily suppressed it. Instead of annihilating them, the Ottoman sultans utilized mamluk personnel in the new regime they established in Egypt and permitted them to carry on their former traditions, which included the purchase and training of new recruits for their own autonomous system. Sultan Suleiman's qanunname of 1524 might have given the impression of an Ottoman regime being imposed on a prostrate mamluk structure, but the regime that took form ought rightly to be considered an Ottoman-mamluk condominium, for mamluks were granted positions of authority throughout this new regime. Ottoman authority in Egypt actually incorporated mamluk military and administrative strength and, though progress was made following the enunciation of the qanunname to "Ottomanize" the administration—especially the important revenue-collecting process—the inability of the new regime to control the political aspirations of the mamluks was to lead to the loss of effective control over this province as early as the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century a revived mamluk system was to completely absorb the Ottoman administration in this key province of the empire.

The Ottomans gave to the chief mamluk leaders the military rank of sanjaq bey, which in familiar usage was shortened to bey. It was the Ottoman equivalent of the Arabic amir, the title by which mamluk leaders in Egypt were previously known. Not all amirs were sanjaq beys, for the term "amir" was also applied to freed mamluks who occupied a second rank below the great amirs in the mamluk military hierarchy. Sanjaq beys of the first rank were granted by the Ottoman government the right to display two *tugs*, or horse tails, on their standards and the use of a band, particularly drums (*tablhanes*), as symbols of their high military rank. They originally received a sizable salary (*salıyane*) from the central treasury, but during the seventeenth century it was drastically reduced, owing to their ability to obtain more than sufficient income from other sources and the desire of the Ottoman government to cut costs. Not all beys from the group of twenty-four beys whom the Ottoman government raised to this rank were mamluks in the sixteenth century. Some, such as the defterdar, or chief treasurer, and the *qapudans*, or captains, of the naval forces at Alexandria, Damietta, and Suez, were appointed from Ottoman ranks.⁶

6. See Shaw, *Organization*, 184-188.

By the seventeenth century, however, mamluk beys had secured important administrative and military positions at all levels of the Ottoman regime in Egypt, including several key positions on the great divan of Cairo itself. The pivotal position of *defterdar* was now usually taken by one of the two most powerful beys within the mamluk beylicate. The *qa'immaqam*, an official who exercised all the authority of the Ottoman governor when the governor was absent, was also selected from the ranks of the beys. Rebellious mamluks of the eighteenth century would use the powers of these two offices to solidify their control over the revenue structure after they expelled the governor from the province. By the eighteenth century the *agha* of the *Mustahfizan*, who claimed a position on the great divan, was also customarily a powerful mamluk bey.

Mamluk beys were used as military commanders to supervise some of Egypt's most important military responsibilities, for example, the *amir al-hajj*, commander of the annual pilgrimage to the holy cities, and his *sirdar*, commander of the troops, accompanying the pilgrim caravan, were mamluk beys. The former position was usually assigned to one of the two most powerful of the mamluk beys (the other becoming *defterdar*), for it had attached to it enormous prestige and extensive revenues and became a symbol of the preeminent position of the bey who held it. Other examples are the *sirdar al-khaznah*, leader of the military force that escorted the annual *irsaliyah* to Istanbul, the *sirdar al-safar*, leader of the annual contingent of troops which Egypt sent to the Ottoman Empire for service outside Egypt, and the *sirdar al-quluq*, also known as *za'im*, commander of the small forts, who commanded police posts at Cairo, Bulaq, and Old Cairo. Mamluks even gained appointment as *qapudans* of the naval forces at Suez, Alexandria, and Damietta during the eighteenth century.⁷

If the cities were often dominated by the Ottoman military units, the countryside remained throughout the Ottoman period the domain of mamluk and bedouin factions. The *qanunname* had allotted all provincial governorships to mamluk officers, called *kashifs*, who were responsible for most governmental functions within their jurisdictions, such as maintenance of security, supervision of the canal and irrigation system, and collection of taxes. The four most important provinces—Girga, Gharbiyah, Sharqiyah, and Manufiyah—were usually assigned to mamluks holding the rank of *sanjaq bey*. Their

7. Ibid., 184-186.

preeminence among the provincial officers was further reflected in their unique title, *hakim*, or governor. The mamluk who administered the province of Girga in Upper Egypt was the most important of the four and carried the title *hakim al-Sa'id*, governor of the south, a reflection both of the strategic location of this province and of this district governor's responsibility to hold the beduins there in check. In fact, regimes in Cairo, whether Ottoman or mamluk, were seldom able to extend their authority south of Girga, for Upper Egypt was usually controlled, as it was throughout most of the eighteenth century, by powerful beduin forces alone or in collaboration with dissident mamluk bands that traditionally sought refuge in the south.

The other Egyptian provinces were assigned to mamluks of the rank immediately below *sanjaq bey*, the *kashifs*, who were recognized as the most important officials within the mamluk military structure after the *beys* themselves. The *kashifs* were themselves *amirs*, the most favored freed slaves of their masters, and were expected in time to take their place within the ranks of the *sanjaq beys*. They numbered between sixty and seventy in the eighteenth century and had to rotate the thirty-six official positions within the administration open to them. No longer governors of entire provinces, but administrators of groups of villages within the provinces, they were still the dominant military power in all provinces not under beduin control. As a sign of their increased importance in the eighteenth century *kashifs* often secured from the Ottoman government the rank of *sanjaq bey* with one *tug*.⁸

Only in the first century of Ottoman rule was the governor of Egypt able to perform the tasks assigned to him in the *qanunname* without interference of the mamluk *beys*. The latter decades of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth witnessed a series of revolts by various elements of the garrison troops assigned to Egypt. These years also seem to have given impetus to a revival within the mamluk military structure; for by the middle of the seventeenth century political supremacy had passed to the *beys*. Two powerful alliances of mamluk-beduin factions emerged to challenge the authority of the governor in the first half of the century. The first, called the *Faqariyah-Nisf Sa'd*, combined mamluks, urban elements, and beduins of the *Nisf Sa'd* into a powerful faction whose goal was to acquire as much control as possible over the revenue system of Egypt. The rival faction, known as the *Qasimiyah-Nisf Haram*, embraced rival

8. Ibid., 186; Shaw, *French Revolution*, 78-79.

mamluks, urban elements, and bedouins of the Nisf Haram. Ultimately, the names of the bedouin groups were dropped and the factions were known simply as the Faqariyah and Qasimiyah, the two political factions that would contest the leadership of Egypt until the middle of the eighteenth century.⁹

In 1660 a minor incident touched off the first civil war among these competing factions. With the military support of the 'Azaban and the authority of the Ottoman governor behind them, the Qasimiyah succeeded in breaking the power of the Faqari and eliminated many, but not all, of its leaders. Two years later, when the Qasimi leader was in turn murdered at the instigation of the Ottoman governor, the power of the mamluk beylicate declined considerably. By 1672 the *khidmat al-sanjaqiyah*, the sum paid by a mamluk to obtain promotion to the beylicate, had dropped to one-half or three-quarters of what it had been two decades earlier, and the saliyane paid to the beys from the treasury for their services was also reduced.¹⁰ The collapse of mamluk power was only temporary, however, for the mamluks maintained their military functions and slowly rebuilt their factions. But they did not openly challenge the power of the governor again until the end of the century.

The conflict that erupted in Egypt near the end of the seventeenth century was provoked by the Mustahfizan. This ojaq had become the base for political gangs that had emerged in the capital and the ports and had secured numerous financial privileges that were the envy of its rivals, particularly the 'Azaban and the revived Faqari and Qasimi factions who were once again involved in the politics of the corps.

Outbreaks of violence, mainly the result of a struggle for control of several offices within the Mustahfizan corps, continued to plague the capital from 1694 to 1711, when the competition finally escalated into a full-scale civil war that drew in all the Egyptian military forces—Ottoman, mamluk, and bedouin. The incident that touched off the conflict related to the attempt of the mamluk faction known as the Qazdughliyah, a group allied to the Faqariyah, to expel a rival from the Mustahfizan corps and reclaim an influence in that corps that it had lost a few years earlier. Despite their historical alliance with the Qazdughliyah, the Faqariyah beys gave their support to the incumbent, but found themselves facing an unexpected and powerful

9. Peter M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent: 1516-1922* (Ithaca, N.Y.: 1966), 84.

10. Ibid.

combination that included the Qazdughliyah, their chief rivals the Qasimiyah, the 'Azaban, and all the other Ottoman corps. In the lengthy conflict that ensued the power of the Faqariyah was once again broken, as it had been a half century earlier, and the Faqari leaders were either killed or driven from Egypt. The power of the Mustahfizan was likewise curtailed, and the corps was subjected to the control of the victorious beys.¹¹

The civil war brought to a temporary end the political supremacy of the Faqariyah, but did not end the struggle with the Qasimiyah, which upon its clear victory over its rival faction split into its own component factions, each contesting the leadership of the beylical system. By the 1730s the Qasimi faction had dissipated its strength in internal conflict and was replaced by an alliance of Faqari and Qazdughli leaders. These two parallel themes, the struggle between mamluks and Ottomans for control of the administration, hence the revenues of Egypt, and the competition among rival mamluk factions for control of the beylicate, course through the history of eighteenth century Egypt. The fratricidal conflict between and among the Faqariyah and Qasimiyah, which lasted for decades after the civil war of 1711, exhausted the human resources of these factions and led ultimately to the victory of yet another faction, the Qazdughliyah. This faction, which would achieve an unprecedented control of both the beylicate and the Ottoman administration in Egypt, would dominate Egypt until the mamluk system itself was disrupted by the French occupation of 1798-1801 and finally uprooted by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in the early nineteenth century.

The civil war of 1711 was a significant event in the long contest between Ottomans and mamluks for control of the Egyptian vilayet, for it resulted in the ascendancy of the mamluk beylicate over the Ottoman military units and therefore blunted the instruments of military power upon which the Ottoman governor depended in his struggle with the mamluk beys. For the next century the beys, unrestrained by Ottoman military power, dominated the political life of Egypt and manipulated the Ottoman administration in Egypt to their own advantage. It was only the mamluk tendency toward factionalism and self-destruction that permitted the Ottoman regime to survive and claim a semblance of authority. Not willing to countenance the loss of this strategic vilayet and its extensive revenues, the Ottoman Empire struggled con-

11. Ibid., 89-90; André Raymond, "Une 'révolution' au Caire sous les Mamlouks: La crise de 1123/1711," *Annales Islamologiques*, 6 (1965), 95-120.

tinuously, but vainly, throughout most of the eighteenth century to regain control of the province and its financial system. But the Ottoman Empire was severely handicapped by its own military exhaustion, so it could only play on natural antagonisms among the constituent parts of the mamluk beylicate to prevent a single mamluk faction from emerging supreme. As the Ottomans had previously conceded military supremacy to the mamluks and clearly were incapable of destroying them, the struggle that ensued centered on the control of the bureaucracy, hence the revenues and expenditures, of this rich province. Given their limited military resources, the Ottoman ability to maintain a modicum of authority in Egypt and the flow of taxes from that province to the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul throughout most of the eighteenth century is a remarkable achievement.

Although the Ottoman government had conceded military supremacy in the Egyptian vilayet to the mamluk beylicate, it retained both the means to intervene in mamluk affairs and the methods to extract the required revenues from the mamluk-dominated province, but the means and methods were predicated on mamluk weaknesses, not on Ottoman strengths. The tendency of the mamluks to occasionally delay or withhold the annual taxes and their success in diverting imperial expenditures from the budget of Egypt to their own purposes forced the Ottoman government to rely upon a new form of revenue, the *hulvan*, death dues, for much of the eighteenth century.¹² The *hulvan* was a payment made to the government when someone acquired the property or revenues of a deceased person in return for the government's legitimization of that transfer of wealth. So unstable were mamluk politics that in time *hulvan* payments delivered to the Imperial Treasury replaced the revenues the mamluks had succeeded in diverting from the treasury from other sources. It became a tempting device by which the Ottomans could exacerbate the natural instability that existed within the mamluk system, for the Ottoman government could offer to legitimize the seizure of one mamluk's property, position, and revenues by another if the latter agreed to pay the *hulvan*. This ability of the Ottoman government to set one faction against another, or one mamluk against his colleagues, permitted the Ottoman regime to retain a tenuous influence in Egypt throughout the eighteenth century.

12. Shaw, *Organization*, 35-38.

For its part the mamluk state did not have the will or inclination to entirely eliminate its Ottoman rival, the result of several fundamental weaknesses that it could not overcome. It was, first of all, dependent upon the annual importation of fresh slaves, male and female, for its survival. Christian youths, usually purchased at an early age, were brought to Egypt, converted to Islam, circumcised, and given instruction in religion and in the arts of war.¹³ For reasons that are not entirely clear, the mamluks imported into Egypt in this manner were unable to reproduce in numbers sufficient for their system to survive without the annual import of mamluk youths. Several European sources have also remarked on the small number of children the mamluk amirs fathered and the high infant mortality rate that claimed an appalling proportion of those that were born in Egypt. Whatever the causes for the inability of the mamluk caste to reproduce itself in Egypt, the fact remains that the Ottoman Empire did not attempt to interdict the flow of mamluk recruits to Egypt, despite being in a position to do so, as long as the mamluks continued to recognize the need to draw their ultimate legitimization from Istanbul. The Ottomans therefore continued to permit the passage of mamluk recruits from the Caucasus and Europe as long as the mamluk factions did not attempt to completely eliminate Ottoman power in Egypt. It is not entirely by coincidence that the decline and demise of the mamluk state coincides with the loss of the traditional recruiting grounds to the Russians. 'Ali Bey's recruitment of so-called Maghribi troops is also

13. David Ayalon's numerous contributions on the functioning of the mamluk system in Egypt have considerably helped our understanding of the materials contained in Egyptian archival sources. Although much of his work deals with the "classical" mamluk structure prior to the Ottoman conquest, it still retains its usefulness for the later period. In addition to two short books, *Gunpowder and Firearms in the Mamlūk Kingdom* (London: 1956) and *l'Esclavage du Mamelouk* (Jerusalem: 1951), see "The Circassians in the Mamlūk Kingdom," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 69 (1949), 135-147; "The Plague and Its Effects upon the Mamlūk Army," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, n.v. - (1946), 67-83; "Le regiment bahriyah dans l'armee 'mamelouke," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 19 (1951), 133-144; "Studies on the Structure of the Mamlūk Army," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 15 (1953), 203-228, 448-476; 16 (1954), 57-90; "The Wafidia in the Mamlūk Kingdom," *Islamic Culture*, 25 (1951), 89-104; "The System of Payment in Mamluk Military Society," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, I (1958), 37-65, 257-296; "Studies in al-Jabarti, Part I, Notes on the Transformation of Mamluk Society in Egypt under the Ottomans," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 3 (1960), 148-174, 275-325; and "The Historian al-Jabarti and His Background," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 23 (1960), 217-249.

possibly tied to his inability to satisfy his needs with troops from the traditional recruiting grounds.

The second weakness has far more significance for explaining the ability of the Ottoman Empire to maintain a tenuous influence in Egypt long after the mamluk factions had gained uncontested military dominance over that province. Throughout its long history the mamluk state was characterized by instability and the tendency to disintegrate into factional strife. The mamluk state was never more than a collection of hostile factions, called "houses" (*buyut*; sing. *bayt*), that could only be welded together for a short period of time by a powerful mamluk leader. The centrifugal forces of mamluk politics often caused component "houses" to spin off and create new coalitions of *buyut*. More often, however, the death of the mamluk leader threw the state into a chaotic struggle that dissipated the power of the leading faction and gave occasion for the rise of an entirely new coalition of factions.

A mamluk *bayt* was itself a coalition of forces having varying degrees of loyalty to the master (called *ustadh*, *ab*, *mawla*, or *sayyid*) of the *bayt*. The core of the *bayt* was composed of two elements having the strongest ties with the master. Closest to the master were his own mamluks, either slave or manumitted, who held important positions within his *bayt*. A hierarchy of advancement carried a successful mamluk warrior through various positions until he was manumitted and elevated by his master to one of the key offices in the mamluk or Ottoman regimes. The highest rank a mamluk could attain was that of amir, or bey. A council (*divan*) of twenty-four mamluks holding the rank of bey formed what might be called the ruling aristocracy of the mamluk state. Of almost equal closeness to the head of the *bayt* were his *kushdashiyah* or *ikhwan* (brothers). They were his companions, in servitude and manumission, who were all the mamluks of a common master. These two groups, the mamluks of the founder of the *bayt* and his *kushdashiyah* (sing. *kushdash*), were bound together by the closest ties of loyalty and mutual interest and in general looked upon all others as hostile "outsiders." Subgroups, of course, existed in this system, as manumitted mamluks were permitted to purchase warriors of their own.

Another element in the mamluk *bayt* was composed of the *atba'* (sing. *tabi'*), followers. It is not entirely clear whether the term "tabi'" referred to mamluks from outside the master's immediate household who gave their allegiance to him, or to the mamluks of his own household and the mamluks of other, usually deceased masters,

who attached themselves to his cause. Archival evidence seems to indicate that by the second half of the eighteenth century the term was used indiscriminately to describe both the personal mamluks of a master, slave or manumitted, and the mamluks of other masters who attached themselves to his bayt.¹⁴

A final element of a mamluk bayt consisted of freeborn troops called *sarrajun* (sing. *sarraj*), armed retainers who accompanied and defended the amir wherever he went. An eighteenth-century manuscript describing the political and administrative framework of the Egyptian vilayet, known as the *Nizamname Misir*, notes that every amir maintained a group of forty to fifty sarrajun. These troops were freeborn Muslims from the Balkan and Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire who originally desired to serve in the army of the amir al-hajj as a means of completing the pilgrimage to Mecca. After several years of satisfactory service the amir would secure for these troops a position within the Ottoman military corps, permit them to grow a beard, and make them partners of merchants doing business with Jidda. On the basis of this testimony in the *Nizamname Misir* Holt suggests the existence of a clear career line between a sarraj and a mamluk. The former, a freeborn Muslim, could only hope to be enrolled in one of the seven Ottoman corps as an ordinary soldier and be established in business with a prosperous merchant. But the mamluk, upon manumission, could hope to become part of the military aristocracy, entering either the beylicate or the officer ranks of one of the seven corps.¹⁵ But the reference in the *Nizamname Misir* to the patron permitting the sarraj to grow a beard, which was one of the special privileges granted to a mamluk upon manumission, might suggest a closer relationship between patron and sarraj than Holt admits.

The significance of the reemergence of a mamluk state in Egypt and a reflection of the power and prestige it had attained in the eighteenth century are to be found in the new title that is applied to the recognized mamluk chief in that century. Whereas the mamluk chief who was recognized as a sort of *primus inter pares* by the other mamluk beys

14. It is Ayalon's contention that the term *tabi'* was restricted solely to designate mamluks, slave or manumitted, of the master. See his "Studies in al-Jabartī: Part I," 278-279. Archival evidence does not support this limited usage.

15. See Shaw, *Nizām-nāme-i Mişir*, 23-24; Peter M. Holt, "The Career of Kāçuk Muḥamad (1676-94)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 26 (1963), 275.

had previously assumed the title *amir misr* (commander of Cairo, Egypt) or *ra'is* (chief), in the first half of the eighteenth century the Ottoman government recognized the title *shaykh al-balad* (chief, commander of the country).¹⁶ Although it did not have official rank within the hierarchy of titles used in the Ottoman Empire, the appellation does indicate a new significance for both the bearer and his regime. The *mashyakhah* (shaykhship) became, however, another means by which the sultan could interfere in mamluk affairs, for it was a title officially bestowed by him and it was possible for the Ottoman government to induce conflict within the Egyptian province by withholding it or offering it to the rival of a hopeful claimant. It became a constant source of intense rivalry among the mamluk amirs, many of whom cooperated with the Ottoman government to acquire the title. Only after a shaykh al-balad felt entirely secure in his position did he resume the usual policy of opposition to the Ottoman regime in Egypt.

The only legitimacy recognized by the mamluk state was the ability of the shaykh al-balad to force the various buyut of which the state was composed to submit to his leadership. Only superior strength and constant defense against treachery could keep his rivals, sometimes even his own mamluks or kushdashiyah, from attempting to destroy him and bring about the dissolution of his bayt. Conflict within the mamluk state appears to be a generic disease, for hardly had one bayt established its supremacy than rival buyut would plot to destroy the fragile equilibrium of the beylicate in the hopes of displacing the incumbent regime. The dominant bayt, for its part, would seek to monopolize the offices of the mamluk and Ottoman regimes and to divert to its own purposes ever increasing sums of state revenues. With these revenues it would seek to increase its strength at the expense of its rivals by purchasing large numbers of mamluk youths, by hiring mercenary auxiliaries for specified periods of time, or by securing the loyalty of the powerful bedouin confederations of Upper and Lower Egypt. Loss of position and revenue by a faction was a serious cause for alarm, for it thereby lost the revenues with which to increase the fighting capacity of its bayt.

16. In his *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, Holt, following the Egyptian historian al-Jabarti, accepts Husayn Bey al-Sabunji (d. 1757) as the first shaykh al-balad. But Shaw, *French Revolution*, 11 n. 1, and again in "The Ottoman Archives as a Source for Egyptian History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 (September-December, 1963), 451 n. 39, cites Ottoman documentary evidence identifying Muhammad Bey Cerkis (1720-1726) as the first mamluk to hold that title.

The death of a shaykh al-balad usually led to the disintegration of his particular bayt and ushered in a period of utter chaos that lasted until a new coalition of forces emerged supreme. The new shaykh al-balad, who might come from the ranks of the deceased leader's kushdashiyah or mamluks, or even from a rival bayt, seldom attained his position without engaging in a bloody struggle that left the defeated buyut thirsting for revenge. Hence the vicious circle of mamluk politics was completed. Peace in the mamluk state was only a temporary interlude between protracted periods of warfare, for seldom did a particular bayt survive for long. The longevity of the bayt created by the Qazdughli amirs Ibrahim and Murad after the death of their master Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab in 1775 is a unique aberration in eighteenth-century mamluk history and is more indicative of Ottoman impotence than inherent mamluk strength.

In brief, Ottoman policy was to prevent an all-powerful mamluk bayt from emerging in Egypt. As long as the mamluk state was composed of a combination of mutually hostile but interdependent buyut the Ottoman government could maximize its own remaining influence by interfering in or mediating mamluk disputes. Reality dictated that the Ottoman regime in Egypt lend its support to a weaker faction in its struggle against a dominant one, for if a single bayt emerged with unchallenged authority, as did the Qazdughliyah, Ottoman influence would be quickly ended.

The Ottoman government used various methods to exacerbate the natural rivalries that existed among the antagonistic factions within the mamluk state and hence to increase its own influence. It was first of all able to bring down powerful mamluk factions by lending its support, either financial or military, to an ambitious faction within the great confederation of mamluk forces. Treachery was a popular method of disrupting a mamluk bayt. The governor could be secretly instructed by the Ottoman government in Istanbul to use the remnant Ottoman military forces at his disposal to murder the shaykh al-balad and the leading amirs. It usually threw the mamluk state into utter confusion and made it possible for the central government to gain temporary leverage by aiding a new shaykh al-balad to stabilize the now warring mamluk buyut. Intrigue, skillfully used, was another powerful weapon of Ottoman representatives. More than once a powerful shaykh al-balad was brought down by a rival or by his own mamluk when the Ottoman government promised to recognize the ambitious rival's seizure of the incumbent's position and possessions. Or the Ottoman

government would provide the money necessary for a mamluk to create a new bayt or hire mercenary troops. The Ottomans showed extraordinary skill in maintaining a precarious presence in Egypt throughout the eighteenth century and demonstrated a remarkable ability to use treachery and intrigue as a means of extracting the required revenues from a province over which they had long relinquished military control.

The Consolidation of Qazdughli Power by 'Ali Bey al-Kabir

The origin of the Qazdughli bayt can be traced to Mustafa Katkhuda al-Qazdughli, a follower in the later years of the seventeenth century of the influential Faqari agha of the Gönüllüyan, Hasan Balfiyah. Lacking positive evidence to indicate that Mustafa al-Qazdughli was a mamluk of Hasan Balfiyah and knowing that Mustafa came from Ottoman lands, Holt suggests that he was possibly of the freeborn sarrajun.¹ Mustafa was eventually to become katkhuda of the Mustahfizan, beginning a long period of Qazdughli control of that office, but his influence was seriously curtailed by the persistent ambition of Küçük Muhammad, *bashodabashi* (company commander) of the same corps. Although but a junior officer within the Mustahfizan, Küçük Muhammad used daring and popular support within the ranks to force his way to power, only to lose it again, on several occasions during a checkered career in Egypt. Upon his final accession to power in 1692, operating as head of a political gang, Küçük Muhammad imposed his will upon the ojaqs and succeeded in having Mustafa al-Qazdughli exiled to Jidda. Hasan Balfiyah interceded, however, and two years later Mustafa was permitted to return to Cairo, whereupon the rivalry between the katkhuda and the bashodabashi resumed. Mustafa was finally able to regain most of his former influence within the corps when Küçük Muhammad was assassinated in 1694, almost certainly on Mustafa's instigation.²

The Qazdughliyah remained a small and insignificant faction on the periphery of the Qasimi-Faqari wars, but successfully guarded their position within the Mustahfizan. After the death of Mustafa Katkhuda al-Qazdughli in 1703 or 1704 the Qazdughliyah again faced a challenge

1. Holt, "The Career of Küçük Muḥammad (1676-94)," 275.

2. Ibid., 284-285.

to their position within the Mustahfizan. This time the threat came from Afranj Ahmad, another bashodabashi in the mold of Kūçük Muhammad, who had become head of yet another political gang in Cairo and who sought to impose his will upon the ojaqs by force of arms and intimidation. Afranj Ahmad caused much of the political turmoil that plagued Egypt for the next few years and was the central figure in the struggle with the Qazdughliyah for dominance of the Mustahfizan. The attempt by the Qazdughliyah to expel him from the ojaq was to precipitate the civil war of 1711.

For two decades after the great civil war ended the political influence of the small Qazdughli bayt stayed rooted in the Ottoman military units while the Faqari and Qasimi factions exhausted their human resources in a fratricidal conflict for control of the beylicate. When the power of the Qasimiyah was finally broken in 1730 a conflict between 'Uthman Bey, leader of the victorious Faqariyah, and Ibrahim, katkhuda of the Mustahfizan and recognized leader of a now more extensive and powerful Qazdughli bayt, plunged the military forces of Egypt into a new round of internal strife. In alliance with Ridwan, the katkhuda of the 'Azaban and head of another minor mamluk bayt known as the Julfiyah, Ibrahim Katkhuda succeeded in driving 'Uthman from Egypt by 1739. It took another decade for the two katkhudas to intrigue and fight their way to the recognized leadership of the political groupings in Cairo, but once established, the duumvirate brought a period of calm to the capital between 1748 and 1754. It was Ibrahim Katkhuda who laid the foundations of Qazdughli power for the rest of the eighteenth century. Within months of the natural death of Ibrahim Katkhuda in November, 1754, however, his mamluks launched a campaign of extermination against Ridwan and the small Julfiyah faction and plunged Egypt into a new round of mamluk assassinations and wars.

Ibrahim and Ridwan had maintained the ojaqs as the base of their political influence but they recognized the need to control the autonomous beylicate. Once they had achieved victory over the Faqariyah each therefore raised three of his own mamluks to the beylicate. The Julfiyah would be eliminated after the death of Ibrahim Katkhuda and ten of Ibrahim's mamluks eventually became beys, causing a dramatic shift in the political base of the now extensive, and divided, Qazdughli bayt away from the ojaqs and toward the beylicate. Ibrahim Katkhuda had established the Qazdughliyah as the dominant bayt in Egypt, but the rapid expansion of his faction and the introduction of so many of

his own mamluks into the beylicate appears to have created a generation gap in the bayt. The older amirs, who preferred regimental commands to entrance into the beylicate, found it difficult to maintain their usual control over the younger beys whose political ambitions could only be realized by changing the balance of power within the bayt. The recognized leaders of the Qazdughliyah still assumed commands within the Mustahfizan, but they did not demonstrate the same ruthlessness or ambition as the mamluks introduced into the beylicate and were unable to halt the fighting among the Qazdughli beys for control of the mashyakhah (headship) of the beylicate. During the prolonged Faqari-Qasimi wars the bayt had been able to avoid destruction as long as Qazdughli amirs had remained within the ojaqs, but, having been introduced into the beylicate, the younger Qazdughli beys showed the same tendency to fragment as the Faqari and Qasimi beys had earlier demonstrated. A protracted contest for leadership now pitted the older amirs against the younger beys whose struggles for the position of shaykh al-balad disrupted the traditional harmony of the Qazdughli faction.

When Ibrahim Katkhuda died, the leadership of the Qazdughli bayt fell to 'Abd al-Rahman who, by Qazdughli tradition, assumed the position of katkhuda of the Mustahfizan. But the beys of the Qazdughli bayt were an unruly element no longer easily controlled by ojaq officers. Ibrahim Katkhuda had been succeeded as shaykh al-balad by his ally Ridwan al-Jalfi, katkhuda of the 'Azab corps, but Ridwan was driven from office in May, 1755, and died of wounds three months later in Upper Egypt. By October, 1755, 'Uthman Bey al-Jirjawi had been recognized as shaykh al-balad and 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda, who had little inclination to enter these interminable mamluk struggles, withdrew to a village in Lower Egypt. It was during 'Uthman Bey's mashyakhah that 'Ali, known then as al-Saghir (the younger) to distinguish him from a senior mamluk of the Qazdughli bayt also named 'Ali, but referred to as al-Kabir (the elder), was raised to the beylicate. 'Uthman remained in office only a short time before he was ousted by a combination of forces including Husayn Bey al-Sabunji, Husayn Bey Kishkish, and 'Ali Bey al-Kabir, known also as al-Ghazzawi.³ Husayn Bey al-Sabunji, who seized the mashyakhah,

3. The careers of the two 'Ali Beys are often confused. Both came to be known as al-Kabir, both had been amir al-hajj, both had been shaykh al-balad and both once sought refuge in Ghazza after their political fortunes took a turn for the worse in Cairo. The first 'Ali Bey al-Kabir, also known as al-Ghazzawi, was the kushdash of 'Ali Bey Balut Kapan, for both were mamluks of Ibrahim Katkhuda. 'Ali Bey

sought to consolidate his power by exiling his major rivals. During this purge 'Ali Bey was exiled for the first time to the village of Nusat in Lower Egypt.

In 1757 another of Ibrahim Katkhuda's mamluks, 'Ali Bey al-Kabir al-Ghazzawi, seized the mashyakhah by assassinating the unfortunate Husayn Bey al-Sabunji. Three years later, while undertaking the responsibilities of amir al-hajj, 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi set in motion a plot to have 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda eliminated during his own absence on pilgrimage. But the plot was discovered and 'Abd al-Rahman succeeded in having the elder 'Ali Bey deposed and the younger 'Ali Bey appointed shaykh al-balad in his place. The elder 'Ali Bey did not return to Egypt, but fled to Ghazza, hence his sobriquet al-Ghazzawi. 'Abd al-Rahman, a retiring leader who gave more attention to repairing and constructing religious edifices than to directing political affairs, did not gain respite by eliminating one 'Ali Bey and appointing to the leadership of the beylicate a younger 'Ali Bey, for by cunning, energy, ambition, and ferocity the younger bey soon overwhelmed his patron and established a new era in Qazdughli history.

'Ali Bey rightfully deserves the attention, though perhaps not the adulation, that has been given him by Western and Arab historians, for he represents a significant departure from the traditional course of mamluk history in at least four important areas. 'Ali Bey first of all refused to grant the customary privileges to opposing factions. Instead of coming to terms with them by granting them position and revenue he used every means to eliminate them entirely. So successfully did he

al-Ghazzawi became a bey during his master's lifetime and contested the mashyakhah of the beylicate after his master's death. He was shaykh al-balad at the time his rivals used his absence on pilgrimage to appoint another 'Ali Bey, the famous Balut Kapan, as the new shaykh al-balad. Holt (*Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 93), Abdul-Karim Rafeq (*Bilād al-Shām wa Miṣr: 1516-1798* [Damascus: 1968], pp. 399 ff.), and John Livingstone ("The Rise of Shaykh al-Balad 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr: A Study in the Accuracy of the Chronicle of al-Jabartī," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 33 [1970], 283-294), successfully unravel the careers of the two 'Ali Beys. It is obvious that Stanford J. Shaw ("The Ottoman Archives as a Source for Egyptian History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 83 [September-December, 1963], 451), confuses the two as one person. The Ottoman documentation Shaw uses in arguing that 'Ali Bey Balut Kapan was actually shaykh al-balad in 1758 refers to an 'Ali Bey al-Kabir, but this is 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi, who was then known as al-Kabir to differentiate him from 'Ali Bey Balut Kapan, who was still known as al-Saghir. With the elimination of 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi the younger 'Ali Bey inherited the description al-Kabir, the elder, by which he is more usually known.

destroy or exile rival mamluk and Ottoman leaders that his bayt had but few rivals after his death. Being unable to play relatively equally balanced factions against one another, the Ottoman Empire saw control of the important vilayet of Egypt pass without contention into Qazdughli hands. Unable to instigate rebellion against the solidly entrenched regime of Ibrahim and Murad, the empire was forced to send a punitive expedition in 1786 to defend its remaining interests in Egypt.

'Ali Bey also departed from tradition by imposing illegal and tyrannical taxes upon the minorities of Egypt, including the Jews, Copts, and European merchant communities.⁴ This same type of tyranny against the French merchant community was intensified by Ibrahim and Murad and helped to provoke the French expedition of 1798.

Having secured complete dominance over the mamluk and Ottoman military factions and having destroyed the power of the bedouin confederations of both Upper and Lower Egypt by 1770, 'Ali Bey launched a series of foreign wars whose purpose was to attach the Hijaz and Greater Syria to the beylicate of Egypt. Had they been successful, 'Ali Bey would have recreated the empire of the medieval Mamluk sultanate that had fallen to Sultan Selim I in 1517.

Finally, 'Ali Bey led his province into rebellion against the sultan and declared his independence, not in some lofty declaration, but in a series of acts usually considered the prerogatives of a sovereign. He refused to tolerate the presence of an Ottoman governor in Cairo and claimed the right to appoint governors of Syria, refused to forward the customary revenues to Istanbul, countenanced his name to be said at

4. On one occasion 'Ali Bey's mamluks are said to have kidnapped four Catholic priests during the celebration of a mass for no other purpose than to extract a large ransom from their community. See R. Clément, *Les Français d'Egypte aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Cairo: 1960), 214. On another occasion he extorted a vast sum from a Jewish concessionaire of the Bulaq customs. See 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Hasan al-Jabartī, *Ajā'ib al-Athār fi al-Tarājim wa al-Akhbār* (Bulaq: 1297/1879-80) I, 309. This remarkable work is the major Arabic history for the period of Qazdughli dominance, the French occupation of 1798-1801, and the rise of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha. The wealth of Jabartī's observations, the general precision with which he recorded his events, and his usual trustworthiness have led David Ayalon ("The Historian al-Jabartī," in Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, eds., *Historians of the Middle East* [London: 1962], 392) to say of him, "In my opinion, al-Jabartī should be considered one of the greatest historians of the Muslim world of all times and by far the greatest historian of the Arab world in modern times." The work has been translated by Chefik Mansour Bey and others, *Merveilles biographiques et historiques ou chroniques du Cheikh Abd-El-Rahman El-Djabarti* (Cairo: 1889), 9 vols. Subsequent references to this work, cited as Jabartī, are to the Arabic edition.

least once in the Friday *khutbah* prayer, and minted coins that carried his own name in addition to the sultan's. He finally carried his rebellion against the sultan into Syria. By allying with the Christian power of Russia, which was then at war with the Ottoman Empire, and with another autonomous chieftain, Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar of Palestine, 'Ali Bey's forces succeeded in conquering southern Syria and for the brief period of ten days held Damascus, the provincial capital.

The broad outlines of 'Ali Bey's career are well known, although they are not always recreated accurately in modern histories. Nor are the facts well established in the contemporary accounts. It appears that 'Ali was introduced into Egypt about 1743 at the age of fifteen when he was given as a present to Ibrahim Katkhuda by Jewish customs officials. In 1749, after moving through the various positions within Ibrahim Katkhuda's household reserved for young mamluks, 'Ali was made a *kashif* and in 1167 (1753-1754) was designated the *amir al-hajj* before being elevated to the beylicate. The young mamluk's exploits against the bedouin forces that threatened the pilgrim caravan were so daring that he earned two nicknames, the Turkish *Balut Kapan*, by which he is more usually known, and the Arabic *Jinn 'Ali*. The former, meaning "he who catches clouds," a reference to his exploits against the bedouins, who are as difficult to catch as clouds, is the sobriquet by which he is usually referred to in contemporary sources. The latter, meaning "'Ali the demon," another reference to his ferocious military exploits, was not used as widely and was also a nickname given to at least two other mamluks with the same name. 'Ali was raised to the beylicate in 1755, after the death of his master and, following his successful return from the Meccan pilgrimage, allied himself with 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda. He was finally selected by his patron as *shaykh al-balad* in 1760. It is at this point that his career begins to differ from the usual course taken by previous mamluk leaders.

'Ali Bey appears somewhat of a folk hero in the Western histories of the eighteenth century, and many of those later histories which rely upon them. French historians such as Volney, Marcel, and Combe are especially gracious to 'Ali Bey, reputing to him prodigious vision and audacious and providential policies.⁵ His revolt against his sovereign

5. Constantine-François Chasseboeuf, better known as Volney, published the accounts of his travels to Egypt and Syria as *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie pendant les années 1783, 1784, 1785* (Paris: 1787), 2 vols. It was translated into English as *Travels through Egypt and Syria in the Years 1783, 1784 and 1785* (London: 1787) 2

and his attempt to gain absolute control over Egypt through the ruthless elimination of his rivals are seen in French historiography as the policies of an eighteenth-century prototype of a modernizing ruler, an early Muhammad 'Ali Pasha. Curiously, modern historians have generally overlooked 'Ali Bey's obvious faults, particularly his elimination through treachery and intrigue of friend and foe alike, and

vols. Subsequent references to Volney are to this English translation. Although he was reconstructing events from oral reports more than a decade after they occurred, his version, though not without errors, compares favorably with what we learn from other sources. Volney maintains a critical attitude toward Muhammad Bey, and his summary of his character betrays the bias that has been repeated in subsequent histories of 'Ali Bey. Volney praises 'Ali Bey for his audacity, energy, and vision, but writes that Muhammad Bey "displayed nothing but the ferocity of a robber, and the baseness of a traitor" (I, 143). The accounts of Sonnini and Savary, often cited in works on eighteenth-century Egypt, are of little use for this study. Virtually the only comment Sonnini devotes to Muhammad Bey is biased and inaccurate, for he remarks that "Mehemet Bey, victorious over his father-in-law (sic) and benefactor, put to death all, who had sided with Ali. In the atrocious exercise of his suspicious cruelty..." (*Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt* [London: 1799], II, 285). Savary can be dismissed in a few words, for he lifted his account of 'Ali Bey's deeds almost verbatim from the work published in English a few years earlier by 'Ali Bey's friend and biographer, S. K. Lusignan (see below). Savary's account therefore reports the same errors contained in the source from which he plagiarized his history. See Claude Etienne Savary, *Lettres sur l'Egypte* (Paris: 1785-1786), 2 vols. It is translated into English as *Letters on Egypt* (London: 1786), 2 vols. J. J. Marcel's work is far from objective and repeats errors found in the published sources of the eighteenth century which he consulted. In reviewing the history of 'Ali Bey he relied heavily on the standard travelers' accounts and had access to Jabarti's chronicle in French translation through a Turkish translation made in Istanbul. Marcel's account is a good synopsis of information collected in those sources, but it is seriously marred by his own prejudice against Muhammad Bey, for whom he reserves many denigrating epitaphs, and by the limitations of his sources. In *Egypte depuis la conquête des Arabes jusqu'à la domination française* (Paris: 1848) Marcel writes of Muhammad Bey's insatiable perfidy (232) and cupidity (234), views his career as one of crime and ingratitude (234) and his mashyakhah as one surpassing the vexations of all the previous oppressors of Egypt (237). He condemns his spirit of implacable vengeance (241) and completes his review of Muhammad Bey's character by calling him vile and criminal, and a traitor. (242). Étienne Combe's "L'Egypte Ottomane de la conquête par Selim (1517) à l'arrivée de Bonaparte (1798)," in *Precis de l'Histoire d'Egypte* (Cairo: 1933), is based on the most important travelers' accounts, general works on the topic by European authors, and published Arabic histories. The few pages of his study that deal with Muhammad Bey make no use of archival materials and incorporate the standard mistakes borrowed from earlier sources. Combe's narrative typically moves directly from 'Ali Bey's defeat to Muhammad Bey's second Syrian campaign, ignoring completely the three years he dominated Egypt as the new shaykh al-balad. He admits, with Jabarti, that Muhammad Bey had some good qualities, but like other French historians of his day presents 'Ali Bey as a hero martyred by his faithless mamluk.

instead condemn his manumitted mamluk, Muhammad Bey, for prematurely ending a career so full of promise.

Whereas 'Ali Bey is often held up as a model prince who was striving to build a modern centralized state, Muhammad Bey, the mamluk who is responsible for his defeat, exile, and death is severely castigated for his alleged treason and is usually described as proud, avaricious, disloyal, and cruel, despite the fact that he followed closely the policies laid down by his master. From a period in which defenders of besieged towns were often put to the sword, historians choose one massacre by Muhammad Bey as a horrifying example of his excessive cruelty.⁶ His massacre of the citizens of Jaffa as punishment for their protracted resistance in 1775 is retold reprovingly in most of the histories of that period, yet Napoleon's massacre of the populace and defenders of the same town in 1798 is usually passed off as an unfortunate but necessary act.

Muhammad Bey, who succeeded his master 'Ali Bey and carried on his policies, appears, therefore, to be a grossly misunderstood and unfairly accused figure in the West. No reason for his unsavory reputation is immediately apparent. It might be surmised that Western historians, particularly French, have been sympathetic to 'Ali Bey's revolt against the Ottoman Empire, his alliance with a Christian state in an effort to gain Egypt's autonomy, his employment of European soldiers of fortune, and his favoritism toward European merchants and European commercial schemes. In repudiating the alliance with the infidel state of Russia, in ending the revolt against the Ottoman government, and once more submitting to the authority (at least in theory) of the sultan, and in encouraging a revival of British trade in the Red Sea, Muhammad Bey would logically earn the disapproval of French historians for reversing trends that, had 'Ali Bey succeeded, would have been so advantageous to Europe, particularly France.

Were he merely unjustly interpreted in Western histories the problem of reconstructing the events of Muhammad Bey's life would not be so difficult. But he also suffers from gross negligence on the part of modern historians, due largely to the paucity of printed sources on his career. Sandwiched between the better known, more con-

6. Among those who originally made the massacre at Jaffa a major element for their critical appraisal of Muhammad Bey's character was the Baron de Tott, who visited Palestine in 1777. He publicized the tale that Muhammad Bey had built a pyramid of 1,500 skulls at Jaffa. See *Memoirs du Baron de Tott* (Amsterdam: 1784), IV, 112.

troversial, and longer careers of his master 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and those of his own famous mamluks, Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey, Muhammad's own illustrious career is often entirely overlooked. This tendency to pass over his career, which stretches from around 1760 to 1775, and the brief period of his mashyakhah stretching from 1772 to 1775, is more common among historians writing in English. It is understandable that his substantial military achievements could be overlooked, yet his entire career, including the important three years in which he gained unprecedented control of the Ottoman administration in Egypt, is generally neglected entirely as historians elide from the mashyakhah of 'Ali Bey to the regime of Ibrahim and Murad.⁷

The history of Muhammad Bey is intertwined from the beginning with the careers of his master and his own kushdashiyah, so it is not surprising that events in his life follow so closely the major events in the lives of his fellow mamluks. Jabarti mentions that Muhammad was purchased by 'Ali Bey in 1175 (1761-62) and was immediately attached to his master's treasury. Jabarti's chronology is obviously erroneous, for in an earlier passage the young mamluk is already to be found playing an important ceremonial role in the marriage of Isma'il Bey in the autumn of 1760.⁸ S. K. Lusignan, 'Ali Bey's Greek confidant and biographer, claims that Muhammad was purchased by the Jewish director of the Alexandria customs from a Turkish merchant in 1758 and was given to 'Ali Bey as a present to incur his favor. As Lusignan had not joined 'Ali Bey's retinue until 1771 it is entirely possible that

7. Numerous examples can be given, but the point is best made by referring to the work of one of the preeminent authorities on eighteenth-century Ottoman-Egyptian history. In briefly reviewing this period Shaw writes in *French Revolution*, 12, "Increasingly in the eighteenth century this became the case, with the virtually independent regimes of 'Alī Bey el-Kebīr between 1768 and 1774 (sic, 1767-1772) and of Murād and Ibrāhīm Beys in the years preceding the French occupation being the outstanding example. The rebellion of 'Alī Bey was ended when the Porte was able to get 'Alī's chief Kāshif to betray and kill his master and thus restore the *Mamlūk* divisions of power." Note that Muhammad Bey is not mentioned by name, nor is there any reference to his term as shaykh al-balad in Shaw's account. The importance of the unnamed Muhammad Bey is further reduced by the reference to him as chief kashif rather than as commander of 'Ali Bey's armies. Nor does Shaw give credit to Muhammad Bey for his successful campaign against Ottoman Syria in 1771. Of the destruction of the power of the Hawwara tribe of Upper Egypt Shaw writes, "It finally was destroyed in 1769 by the army of 'Alī Bey el-Kebīr" (ibid., 141 n. 182). Muhammad Bey fares even worse in the work of others. S. M. Anderson (*The Eastern Question: 1774-1923* [New York: 1966], xvi) assigns the leadership of the first Syrian invasion to 'Ali Bey himself, who in reality stayed in Egypt, and fails to mention Muhammad Bey at all.

8. Jabarti, I, 252, 417.

he took this version from Giovanni Mariti, who offers the same information on Muhammad Bey's introduction to Egypt, minus the date: "This youth was then about sixteen; was born in Circassia; was well made, bold and courageous, and very expert in his exercises: Possessing these qualities and being also his countryman, 'Ali Bey took him, and having no male children, he grew very fond of him"⁹. Lusignan also remarks that after purchase Muhammad was attached to 'Ali Bey's treasury, so the sources are in agreement on this point.

9. S. K. Lusignan, *A History of the Revolt of Aly Bey against the Ottoman Porte* (London: 1783), 80; Giovanni Mariti, *Istoria della guerra accesa nella Soria, l'anno 1771* (Florence: 1772), 75. The major European memoir dealing with the career of 'Ali Bey is the eyewitness account of the Greek Saviour Kosmopolites Lusignan, who in his youth was acquainted with 'Ali Bey and who became part of his entourage after returning to Egypt in 1770 at 'Ali Bey's request. Lusignan shared with 'Ali Bey his last exile in Palestine and accompanied him on his unsuccessful return and confrontation with Muhammad Bey, deserting him only when all was lost. Although he was an eyewitness to most of the events he reports, his dates and circumstances are often in error, sometimes by as much as two years, owing, as he admits, to the loss of his journals and notes and his attempt to write the history of 'Ali Bey from memory after the passage of ten years. Not all his version is accepted without opposition. Volney, for instance, ridicules Lusignan's story of 'Ali Bey's origins. He calls the episode of 'Ali Bey's father, the Greek priest Da'ud, visiting Egypt after his son had obtained the mashyakhah a fabrication so contrived that the European residents of Cairo had a good laugh at its expense. Lusignan's biography is considered unreliable by many scholars, for it contains numerous incidents and interpretations not verified by other sources. The Italian priest Giovanni Mariti visited the Levant in the mid-1760s. His history of the Syrian campaign is a useful source, but lamentably ends in 1772 with 'Ali Bey still in Palestinian exile. Mariti's history is also of interest because it includes three incidents whose accounts are amazingly similar to ones found in Jabarti's famous history, suggesting that one author took the accounts from the other, which is unlikely, or that both reported their accounts verbatim from a third source, perhaps the Venetian consul in Cairo. Mariti also published two other works on Syria that touch briefly on the mamluk state of Egypt. See *Travels through Cyprus, Syria and Palestine*, translated from the Italian (London: 1793), 3 vols., and *Geschichte Fakkardin's, Gross-Emire der Drusen* (Gotha: 1790). A useful reference work including biographical information on the English travelers who visited the Middle East in the eighteenth century is Mohamed Ali Hachicho's "English Travel Books about the Arab Near East in the 18th Century," *Die Welt des Islams*, n.s., IX, No. 104 (1964), 1-206. French travelers who through the centuries visited and wrote about Egypt are reviewed in Jean-Marie Carré's *Voyageurs et écrivains français en Égypte* (Cairo: 1956), 2 vols. A similar collection of German books about Egypt in the first half of the nineteenth century remains little used. See Louis Keimer, "Les Voyageurs de langue allemande en Égypte entre 1800 et 1850," *Cahiers d'Histoire Égyptienne*, 5 (March, 1953), 1-28. A useful study of the accomplishments of 'Ali Bey in Arabic is Muhammad Rif'at Ramadan's *Alī Bey al-Kabīr* (Cairo: 1950). Though based on a wide range of Egyptian and European archival, manuscript, and published sources, it frequently accepts data or interpretations in an uncritical manner. It remains, nevertheless, a useful study.

Lusignan's dating seems only slightly less inaccurate than Jabarti's, for it seems evident that Muhammad entered 'Ali Bey's service around 1760, probably immediately after 'Ali became shaykh al-balad. Why else would the customs agent give him such a gift? Jabarti noted elsewhere in his history that when 'Ali Bey raised his khazandar (chief treasurer) and kushdash Isma'il to the rank of bey in the autumn of 1760 he also elevated the young Muhammad to the vacated treasury position, and remarked that Muhammad had not long remained in his master's service before attaining the rank of khazandar.¹⁰ Rapid advancement was no longer unusual within the mamluk system. Murad, for instance, was purchased by Muhammad in 1768 and almost immediately raised to the rank of bey. Had Muhammad been purchased in 1758, as Lusignan contends, it is doubtful that Jabarti would have mentioned that Muhammad had remained only a short time in 'Ali Bey's service before becoming his khazandar.

In the autumn of 1760 Cairo was treated to a month-long celebration in advance of Isma'il's state wedding, for 'Ali Bey was permitting him to marry the daughter of their former master, Ibrahim Katkhuda. 'Ali Bey's new khazandar, the teen-aged Muhammad, played an important ceremonial role in the bridal procession, marching beside the sedan in which the bride was brought to her husband.¹¹

There is no further mention of Muhammad in the sources until he accompanied 'Ali Bey on the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina in 1764 (A.H. 1177). 'Ali Bey himself had been elevated to the rank of bey after he had made the same trip to the holy cities in 1754. Perhaps remembering the triumphs and joys of his own career, and having especial favor for his young mamluk, he permitted Muhammad to grow his beard while in Mecca, this being the traditional sign of manumission.¹² Upon their return to Cairo he elevated his khazandar to the rank of bey and invested him with the robe of honor, the insignia of office, in a solemn ceremony in the citadel.

It is from this ceremony that Muhammad Bey gained the sobriquet of "Abu al-Dhahab," the "father of gold," or "he who possesses gold." Custom demanded that newly appointed beys distribute bakhshish, or largess, to the crowds lining the way on the descent from the citadel after the ceremony of investiture. But whereas others had always distributed silver coins to the multitude, the proud Muhammad

10. Jabarti, I, 417.

11. Ibid., 252.

12. Ibid., 253.

threw gold to the populace lining the way between the citadel and his residence. For this unusual beneficence the crowd called him "Abu al-Dhahab." In recounting the story Jabarti added that the new bey was much flattered by this title and thereafter sought to live in a fashion that merited the description. Henceforth he never carried other than gold coins, claiming that "The possessor of gold should not touch ought but gold."¹³ Travelers have verified the magnificence of Muhammad Bey's tent while on campaign, the richness of his surroundings, the extravagant style in which he lived, and his habit of giving only gold as bakhshish.¹⁴ These travelers and most historians relying on their accounts insisted that his title was more a reflection on his avariciousness and lust for power than a title bestowed upon him by the surprised Cairo multitude that benefitted from his unusual largess.

Although 'Ali Bey had acquired the mashyakhah in 1760, he remained inferior to 'Abd al-Rahman, katkhuda of the Mustahfizan corps and recognized leader of the Qazdughliyah. The shaykh al-balad not only found his authority circumscribed by the prestige and power of 'Abd al-Rahman, who preferred the seclusion of semi-retirement to the daily affairs of state, but by the lingering influence of the Ottoman governor and the presence of powerful mamluk rivals in Cairo and the provinces. This situation was intolerable to the ambitious 'Ali Bey, who knew that to become absolute he would have to increase the size and strength of his own bayt while diminishing the numbers, hence the power, of his mamluk and Ottoman rivals. In practice this meant eliminating his rivals, raising mamluks of his own choice to the beylicate, insinuating his own mamluks into the important offices of the state and the ojaqs, and significantly expanding the sources of his income. Although he had already begun to corrupt the Mustahfizan corps and had succeeded in creating eight beys from his own bayt by

13. Ibid., 417.

14. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (Edinburgh: 1790), IV, 628-629. The intrepid traveler and explorer James Bruce passed through Cairo twice, once on his passage to Upper Egypt and again on his return after two years of explorations on the Upper Nile. The latter occasion, which he reports in a few pages of his journal, occurred just prior to the battle of al-Salihyah in 1773. One senses a deep resentment of Muhammad Bey in Bruce's account of his meeting with the new shaykh al-balad, for he describes him as "son-in-law (sic) to Ali Bey my friend, whom he had betrayed and forced to fly into Syria, where he was still at the head of a small army. He had been present with him the day I had my last audience, when he was plainly dressed as a soldier" (IV, 625). Although Bruce was well received by Muhammad Bey and concluded a treaty with him to encourage English trade in the Red Sea, his journal offers but a few asides into the careers and characters of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey.

1766, his first drive for absolute power, which seems to have begun only in 1763 and to have picked up momentum after his return from the pilgrimage in 1764, ended in his own exile. Ultimately, however, 'Ali Bey would overwhelm his rivals by the sheer weight of the size of his bayt, which was said to include approximately 3,000 mamluks in 1766, and successfully purge the Ottoman and mamluk hierarchies of his foes.¹⁵

The lifeblood of 'Ali Bey's regime, and one of the chief factors in explaining the changes that overcame the mamluk system in the latter half of the eighteenth century, was money. Throughout his career 'Ali Bey demonstrated an insatiable need for extraordinary sums of money. His own requirements were unusual enough if he were to support a bayt of 3,000 mamluks, but his wars against his rivals, his expedition to Arabia, and his campaigns into Syria put an unbearable strain upon the traditional tax structures in Egypt. In the end 'Ali Bey was driven to incredible lengths in his search for the revenues to support his ambitious programs. Whereas the mamluks had frequently imposed *avanies* (exactions) upon the foreign communities in Egypt and extorted sums from the Copts and Jews, they had usually maintained a sense of balance in their demands that left the victims able to carry on. 'Ali Bey and his successors began to make extraordinary demands upon all communities and these ultimately destroyed the foreign commercial houses, left the Jews and the

15. The official correspondence of the French consuls and vice-consuls in the Middle East form a major source for the history of the area. Their importance has been pointed out by M. N. Svoronos, "Les correspondances des consuls de France comme source de l'histoire de Proche-Orient," *Actes de XXI^e Congrès International des Orientalistes* (Paris: 1949). These materials, preserved in the Archives Nationales of Paris (hereafter AN), are to be found in Sous-Série B1 (Correspondance Consulaire—Lettres Reçues); Sous-Série B111 (Papiers de l'Ancien Bureau des Consultats); and Archives de la Marine B7 (Lettres Reçues—Memoires et documents divers). The correspondence of the two consuls who served the French merchant community in Egypt during the period under review, d'Amirat (1759-1774) and Mure (1774-1789), form some of the most useful European archival materials for this period. Their reports are usually authoritative, incisive, and wide-ranging, particularly relating to the many so-called revolutions within the mamluk state. This correspondence is supplemented by that of the vice-consuls at Alexandria and, for a short time, Rosetta. Incredibly, two gaps exist in this correspondence from Egypt, one running from May, 1772, to February, 1773, and the other from June 20, 1773, to March 30, 1774. These gaps, which remarkably correspond with a similar lapse in Jabarti's chronicle for the same period, leave a significant part of Muhammad Bey's mashyakhah unreported by both major European and Arabic sources. The estimate of the size of 'Ali Bey's bayt is d'Amirat's. See AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), March 21, 1766.

Catholic missions in ruin, and stripped rivals of all their property. The tax structure was pressed to give up ever greater amounts, expenditures traditionally the responsibility of the mamluks were debited to the Imperial Treasury, and ultimately the entire *miri*, or state, revenues intended for the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul were withheld as 'Ali Bey moved into open rebellion against the empire. Even the *awqaf* revenues of the mosques and schools were subject to occasional seizure. These illegal and excessive practices became commonplace among the mamluks of the second half of the century and played a role in provoking both the Ottoman expedition of 1786 and Napoleon's campaign of 1798 (see chapter four). All these practices were to be refined by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha (1805-1849) in the next century.

A report of the exile of Janissary officers from Alexandria in 1763 signals one of 'Ali Bey's first assaults on the power of this corps in Egypt.¹⁶ That same year he demanded an enormous *avanie* from the fathers of Terre Sainte. Among his outrages at the time was the arrest of four priests whom he refused to release until their superior promised to pay 250 purses.¹⁷ French consular reports of this period show that it was difficult for Ottoman governors to exercise much influence over 'Ali Bey and to extend to the French community the protection guaranteed by its capitulatory rights.¹⁸ Then in 1764 the newly arrived Ottoman governor died under suspicious circumstances even before he had been installed.¹⁹ It was the beginning of 'Ali Bey's unceasing struggle with Ottoman governors, whom he deposed or eliminated with great frequency.

In 1765 'Ali Bey freed himself of remaining restraints on his ambitions by the exile of 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda to the Hijaz. His repeated assaults upon the *ojaqs*, whose officer corps he now began to pack with his own mamluks, his tyranny and disregard for tradition, and his attacks upon fellow mamluk amirs alarmed his rivals and provoked the first check to his drive for absolute power. That check came from the enfeebled, yet still dangerous, Ottoman quarter when the sultan dispatched a new governor by the name of Hamzah Pasha with secret instructions to curtail 'Ali Bey's power. The subsequent maneuvers of this pasha are a classic example of how the Ottoman central government maintained some control over the mamluks by

16. AN, B1, 109 (Alexandrie), August 19, 1763.

17. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), December 16, 1763.

18. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), and 109 (Alexandrie), for the period 1763-64.

19. AN, B1, 109 (Alexandrie), September 20, 1764.

balancing one faction against another and by using the power of the governor as mediator or manipulator of mamluk rivalries. As shown in the case of 'Ali Bey, Ottoman manipulation was even able to bring down an unwanted shaykh al-balad. It should be pointed out, though, that 'Ali Bey would be the last shaykh al-balad to be deposed by such maneuvers.

The seeds of conflict within mamluk ranks were first sown when Hamzah Pasha permitted the return of numerous exiles, among whom was Husayn Bey Kishkish, 'Ali Bey's kushdash and chief rival. It did not take long for these seeds to bear sweet fruit for the governor. As the tension between the two protagonists mounted, 'Ali Bey took the initiative in March, 1766, by bribing a Neapolitan doctor to poison Husayn Bey in his palace. But Husayn Bey discovered the plot and apparently informed Hamzah Pasha, who committed his own forces to the conflict. The governor now sent ojaq troops to join Husayn Bey's mamluks in surrounding 'Ali Bey's palace. This show of force obliged 'Ali Bey, despite the size of his own bayt, to accept the exile that was now ordered by the governor. Although he was the paramount mamluk, Husayn Bey accepted the command of the pilgrimage while his kushdash Khalil Bey became shaykh al-balad.²⁰ Hamzah Pasha, who now appeared superior to the new shaykh al-balad, originally ordered 'Ali Bey to Jidda, but changed the order to Medina at 'Ali Bey's request. 'Ali Bey left Cairo with a retinue that included Dhu al-Faqar Bey, Isma'il Bey, and Muhammad Bey,²¹ but upon reaching Suez turned instead toward Ghazza, where he marshaled his forces for the return to Cairo. D'Amirat reported this same month that he had learned of the marriage of 'Ali Bey's daughter to one of his retinue. This must have been the marriage to Muhammad Bey, for it would fit properly into the very hazy chronology of events Lusignan offers for this period.²² But the marriage was with his sister, not his daughter.

20. AN, B1, 109 (Alexandrie), March 18, 1766; B1, 333 (Le Caire), March 21, 1766; Jabarti, I, 254-55.

21. John Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabîr and the Mamlûk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 1968), 270, citing an Ottoman register from Cairo.

22. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), March 22, 1766. It is curious that both Sonnini (II, 285) and Bruce (IV, 625), who could not have known much about his private life, refer to him mistakenly as the son-in-law of 'Ali Bey. Lusignan, 86, ties the marriage between 'Ali Bey's sister and Muhammad to the arrival of 'Ali Bey's father, the reputed Greek priest Da'ud. Although Volney (I, 116) ridicules the story, two other facts of the tale related by Lusignan appear to have some foundation. Lusignan mentions that 'Ali Bey's nephew and sister accompanied his father to Egypt. 'Ali Bey, he noted, elevated the former to the rank of bey in 1768;

Khalil Bey and Husayn Bey soon proved themselves to be as tyrannical as 'Ali Bey, and just as rebellious. Their exactions against the French community became so alarming that there was even a suggestion that the French might have to abandon Cairo.²³ Hamzah Pasha therefore reversed his policy and began to work for the rehabilitation of 'Ali Bey's bayt, hoping thereby to use it as a counterweight to the tyranny of Khalil and Husayn. It was perhaps felt that 'Ali Bey, who had dramatically experienced the ability of the sultan to punish a rebellious shaykh al-balad, would be more obedient than the incumbents. Hamzah Pasha's plans were greatly aided by 'Ali Bey's inherent audacity and courage, but they did not take account of 'Ali Bey's ambitions.

On September 4, 1766, 'Ali Bey dramatically appeared in Cairo with the beys of his house. 'Ali Bey himself appeared at the residence of Husayn Bey Kishkish while Muhammad Bey went to 'Uthman al-Jirjawi and Ayyub Bey to the house of Ibrahim Agha. They demanded to be reinstated in the mamluk divan, though they would be subservient, they said, to the incumbent beys. Opinion was divided on what to do with the returned rebels. One group of beys felt that they should exile 'Ali Bey and his mamluks once again, for 'Ali Bey would not rest, they said, until he had eliminated all of them. The appeal to the mamluk principle of loyalty, however, carried the day for 'Ali Bey. The majority felt they should not exile one of their own kushdashiyah, but they were not yet ready to take 'Ali Bey back into their midst. Hamzah Pasha's order of exile was set aside, but the beys banished 'Ali Bey to Nusat, a village near Damietta in the delta, whose revenues of 10,000 piasters they gave him. In an incredible act of folly, the divan sent the rest of his retinue, including Muhammad Bey, to Upper Egypt.²⁴ There they found a large group of exiles headed by Salih Bey, the leader of the remnant forces of the Qasimi faction.

the latter he married to Muhammad. Both the presence of 'Ali Bey's nephew in the ranks of the beys and the marriage of his sister to Muhammad are verified in other sources. Mariti (*Istoria*, 89), correctly calls Muhammad the brother-in-law of 'Ali Bey.

23. AN, B1, 440 (Constantinople), December 20, 1767. In June, 1767, three French merchants were arrested by a bey who demanded 500 purses for their release. It was difficult for the French to go into the streets at the end of May, 1767, and in October of that year six French nationals were attacked by a mob of 50-60 persons (AN, B1, 333 [Le Caire], June 16 and October 23, 1767).

24. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), October 25, 1766; B1, 109 (Alexandrie), September 9, 1766; Jabarti, I, 255. Abdul-Karim Rafeq (*The Province of Damascus: 1723-1783* [Beirut: 1966], p. 252) suggests that 'Ali Bey's sudden return to Cairo was the

'Ali Bey was now in a better position to conspire from close range against the regime in Cairo. In February, 1767, a secret correspondence between him and Hasan Bey al-Azbakawi was uncovered. The latter was put to death and Sulayman, katkhuda of the Cavusan, and two of his beys were exiled for their conspiracy. 'Ali Bey was told to prepare himself once more for exile to Jidda. While 'Ali Bey awaited his escort, Hamzah Pasha undertook in March to execute the secret orders he had received from Istanbul to destroy the mamluk leaders and return Egypt to the control of the empire. Several beys were killed and Husayn Bey Kishkish was himself wounded in Hamzah Pasha's surprise attack, but the mamluks rallied and instead deposed Hamzah Pasha. He was ordered to exile in Jidda and 'Ali Bey was miraculously told to proceed to Asyut.²⁵ But the Ottoman government was unwilling to be diverted from its course and dispatched a new governor, Muhammad Raqim Pasha, with secret orders to give whatever aid he could to 'Ali Bey in an effort to restore a balance among the mamluk houses.²⁶

The presence of so many dissident beys in the Sa'id was a serious threat to the regime in Cairo and virtually insured further conflict within the mamluk state. With the urging of the bedouin Shaykh Humam, leader of the powerful Hawwara tribe that controlled the Nile Valley more or less between Asyut and Aswan, 'Ali and his faction made peace with the other exiles, who were generally the remnants of the formerly influential Qasimi bayt. 'Ali and Salih now joined forces and began a classic maneuver against the regime in Cairo, cutting off river traffic, interdicting the flow of foodstuffs from Upper Egypt, and withholding taxes from the provinces above Asyut. Husayn Bey and Khalil Bey led several fruitless expeditions against them during the summer in an effort to break the embargo against Lower Egypt, but were themselves eventually forced to take up defensive positions behind Cairo's walls when 'Ali and Salih finally descended the Nile with their forces in the autumn of 1767. Muhammad Raqim Pasha, who had previously dispatched ojaq troops in support of Khalil and Husayn's expeditions against the dissidents, now saw his chance to topple the unwanted duumvirate. When the dissident forces appeared before Cairo he withdrew his support from Khalil and Husayn by

result of pressures brought against him in Ghazza by the governor of Damascus, his personal enemy 'Uthman Pasha.

25. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), March 31, 1767; B1, 109 (Alexandrie), February 4, 1767, March 16, 1767; Jabarti, I, 255.

26. AN, B1, 440 (Constantinople), August 31, 1767.

ordering the ojaq troops to their barracks. As so often happened in mamluk conflicts, success was determined more by the momentum of events than by a test of battle. 'Ali and his ally entered Cairo in October, 1767, as Khalil and Husayn now took refuge in Ghazza.²⁷

The next four and one half years form a period of uninterrupted aggrandizement for 'Ali Bey and his bayt. His rivals were slaughtered or driven from Egypt, he rebelled against the Ottoman government and created an empire that stretched to Upper Egypt, along the Red Sea coasts, and into Palestine and parts of Syria. 'Ali Bey is given credit for all this, yet each of these achievements was the work of his mamluks, particularly that of his freed slave and brother-in-law, the much maligned Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, who fought virtually all his master's wars, murdered his master's rivals with his own hands, and executed his numerous and difficult schemes with dispatch.

'Ali Bey's return to Cairo in October, 1767, marks the beginning of a ruthless campaign to murder or eliminate by whatever means possible all potential rivals, whether among the ranks of his allies or enemies, and to secure uncontested power over both the mamluk and Ottoman hierarchies in Egypt. His ability to eliminate his rivals was aided by the executive powers he assumed upon his return to Cairo, for Muhammad Raqim Pasha made him shaykh al-balad and confirmed his amirs in the dignities and positions they had held before their exile.²⁸ Ottoman leaders had seriously mistaken 'Ali Bey's ambitions when they used their resources to bring him back to power, for he almost immediately unleashed a savage campaign against both mamluk and ojaq leaders.

On November 30, 1767, 'Ali Bey invited Hasan Bey and 'Ali Bey Jinn to banquet with him. When the events of the evening were completed the two beys were accompanied on their homeward journey by Muhammad Bey and his kushdash, Ayyub Bey. Along the route 'Ali Bey's two mamluks fell upon their unsuspecting companions and murdered them. The next day 'Ali Bey took advantage of the shock created by this act to order the exile of four beys and several of their followers, among whom were members of the ojaqs. Three months later, on March 1, 1768, he exiled about thirty officers, including eighteen amirs attached to the bayt of his ally Salih Bey. More purges continued for the next two years.²⁹

27. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), December 22, 1767; Jabarti, I, 258.

28. Jabarti, I, 258.

29. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), December 14, 1767; March 10, 1768; B1, 110

After wintering in Ghazza Khalil Bey and Husayn Bey Kishkish returned to Lower Egypt in May of 1768. Upon hearing of their return, 'Ali Bey wisely had them declared rebels by the governor. The firman which was issued against them was an interesting device, for it deprived Husayn and Khalil of whatever protection the law might extend to them and permitted 'Ali Bey to deduct the expenses of his campaign against them from the sultan's treasury since he was fighting the sultan's rebels. He nevertheless levied a tax on merchants and foreigners at the same time.³⁰

The rebels defeated a small party near the village of Samannud which had been sent out by 'Ali Bey, collected taxes from the villages through which they passed, and proceeded toward Tanta, where they assumed a defensive position upon the approach of a second and larger force commanded jointly by Muhammad Bey and Salih Bey. As mamluks were ill prepared both psychologically and militarily for siege warfare, Muhammad Bey and Salih Bey found it exceedingly difficult to dislodge their enemies from Tanta. After many days of unproductive exchanges the defenders finally exhausted their ammunition and, as was typical of these mamluk encounters, asked for the *aman*, or cease-fire amnesty. Muhammad Bey solemnly gave his assurances of amnesty, promised to reconcile the defeated beys with his master, and invited them to join him in his camp. Put off his guard by these assurances, Husayn Bey Kishkish appeared in Muhammad Bey's camp unescorted on May 24, whereupon Muhammad Bey produced the firman calling for the death of the rebels. Husayn Bey was immediately set upon and beheaded.³¹

(Alexandrie), April 21, 1770; Jabarti, I, 306; Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), London, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 44, 17-18, March 2, 1768. For most of the eighteenth century the British were not as deeply rooted as the French in Egypt and the Levant. British trade was carried on by the Levant Company and was funneled through the Persian Gulf and Aleppo. The majority of British archival records for these areas are preserved in the Public Record Office in London. The correspondence of the British ambassadors at Istanbul, contained in the series State Papers Foreign (SP 97—Turkey, 1577-1779), is not as incisive as the French, owing to the lack of British representation in Egypt and Palestine for most of the eighteenth century. The papers of the Levant Company, whose activities were centered in Aleppo, are preserved in series SP 110 and deal mostly with northern Syria. Series SP 105 contains orders of the Levant Company to its agencies in the Levant. The correspondence of George Baldwin (see below) can be found in FO 24, Box 1.

30. A detailed report of this conflict was prepared by d'Amirat (AN, B1, 110 [Alexandrie], June 16, 1768).

31. Ibid.; Jabarti, I, 259, 305-306; PRO SP 97 (Turkey), Box 44, 41-42; Shaykh Ismā'il Kashshāb, *Tadhkirat li Ahl al-Baṣā'ir wa al-Abṣār ma' Wajh al-Ikhtisār*,

The slightly more prudent Khalil Bey had meanwhile sought refuge in the mosque of al-Sayyid al-Badawi in Tanta and Muhammad Bey chose not to violate the traditional sanctuary which this revered mosque afforded. This respect for Muslim traditions characterized Muhammad Bey's career and may be a key to understanding his sudden return from Damascus two years later. Upon the instructions of 'Ali Bey, Muhammad Bey permitted Khalil to proceed into banishment in Alexandria. Shortly after his arrival, however, the promise of aman was again broken. Khalil Bey was strangled on July 18. In the interval, Muhammad Bey and Salih Bey had entered Cairo in a victory procession carrying on platters the heads of their colleagues killed at Tanta.³² 'Ali Bey would not grant the same toleration to his rivals that they had shown to him.

This episode played out at Tanta and Alexandria was to be repeated many times as 'Ali Bey used every method to secure ascendancy over the other beys. He would ruin them through extortion, break up their combinations through exile, then murder them. In this way the bayt of Khalil and Husayn was virtually exterminated. 'Ali Bey now used the rest of the year 1768 to extirpate Cairo of mamluk and Ottoman rivals, great or small, friend or foe, and to consolidate his hold over the bureaucracy and its revenues.

At the same time that 'Ali Bey was eliminating his mamluk rivals he was also emasculating the ojaqs, particularly the Mustahfizan, which was the only remaining Ottoman corps with the power to interfere in mamluk politics. The governor had still been able, as demonstrated by 'Ali Bey's first exile and his return, to use the small forces at his command to determine the victor in the interminable disputes among mamluk factions and thereby continued to force the beys to respect the ultimate sovereignty of the sultan. Although they did largely as they pleased, the presence of the governor and the ojaq troops at least represented some restraints upon the tyranny of the beys. 'Ali Bey was now determined to be rid of these remaining restraints.

The Mustahfizan in particular were a lingering threat to 'Ali Bey's despotism. Mustahfizan officers are to be found among 'Ali and Salih's allies in their earlier struggle with Khalil and Husayn in 1767 and it can be assumed that they participated in the government that

Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris), F.A. 1858, ff. 14-15. Kashshāb's account, written upon the request of the French, reports the major events of 'Ali Bey's career but contains numerous errors.

32. AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), August 2, 1768; Jabarti, I, 306.

was established after the entry of the victorious party into Cairo. Yet Janissary officers were among those whom 'Ali Bey purged in March and July, 1768.³³ By September the French acting consul Boyer reported that "Never has the Janissary ojaq been reduced to the point it is today."³⁴ Among the names of those purged throughout 1768 are to be found officers of the Mustahfizan, Gönüllüyan, Tufenkciyan, 'Azaban, Muteferriqah, Çavuşan, and Çerakise, in other words, from all the regimental units. By reducing their pay 'Ali Bey turned the lesser members of the ojaqs away from the military life toward other pursuits. He also appropriated for himself the lucrative urban iltizams that previously had been controlled by the officers of the regiments, as is shown in chapter four. 'Ali Bey replaced the officers exiled or murdered with mamluks of his own, permitted his beys to build subhouses of their own while he continued to purchase an unusual number of mamluks for himself, and hired corps of mercenaries to supplement his mamluk forces.³⁵ In this way he was able to simply overwhelm his enemies, who persisted in the eighteenth-century traditions of small factions. If we can believe the sources, 'Ali Bey was able to commit to battle armies of 25,000 to 40,000 troops.³⁶

'Ali Bey completed his revolution in September, 1768. On the 11th of that month the remaining mamluk beys, including his ally Salih, met together to arrange the matters of state. The meeting over, the beys began their homeward journey in procession. As the beys and their retinue advanced through the narrow streets of Cairo, the mamluks of 'Ali Bey maneuvered to place Salih Bey in their midst. At a point where Salih was temporarily isolated from his own partisans Muhammad Bey delivered a sabre blow to his shoulder and Ayyub Bey managed to strike another blow to the head. Maneuvering their

33. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), February 17, 1768, March 10, 1768; B1, 110 (Alexandrie), June 16, 1768; Jabarti, I, 258.

34. Cited in Henri Dehérain, "L'Egypte Turque," in Gabriel Hanotaux, ed., *Histoire de la nation égyptienne*, Vol. V (Paris: 1931), 128.

35. Estimates vary on the size of 'Ali Bey's forces, for there were his own mamluks, the mamluks of his amirs, mercenaries and allies. He also had an estimated 6,000 Maghribi troops. Dehérain (*ibid.*, 128) places the number of his mamluks at 3,000, the number given by d'Amirat. George Baldwin (*Political Recollections Relative to Egypt* [London: 1801], 193) states 'Ali Bey's armies included 10,000 mamluks, 2,000-3,000 sarrajun, and 20,000 attendants.

36. The figures, which are those of Lusignan and consular reports, are probably inflated, but it should be remembered that 'Ali Bey assembled bedouin auxiliaries and had mutawalis from southern Lebanon and Shaykh 'Umar's forces as allies. The English consul of Aleppo estimated the army that attacked Damascus in 1771 at 60,000. See PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 47, 156.

horses in close quarters, the other beys, with the exception of Ahmad Bey al-Jazzar joined in the murder of their master's ally. Salih's corpse was returned to the house of 'Ali Bey as proof of the success of the onslaught on the bey who had made 'Ali Bey's return to Cairo possible. The body was then given proper burial. Salih's bayt now suffered the same fate as had befallen that of Khalil and Husayn Kishkish only a few months earlier. Amirs of his house and his allies among the ojaqs were exiled to Jidda, Tanta, and Damietta. Those that were able took refuge in Upper Egypt. Others were given to Muhammad Bey.³⁷

This incident was also the occasion for the fall of Ahmad Bey al-Jazzar. Although he had been elevated to the beylicate by 'Ali Bey, he was not one of 'Ali's mamluks, but his kushdash. He had been a close friend of Salih Bey, and refused to participate in the murder, although he rode with the others. Angered by Ahmad's refusal to strike a blow on his behalf, 'Ali Bey gave orders for his arrest. But too late, for the alert Ahmad fled that same night, first to Alexandria in the dress of a Maghribi, then to Istanbul, and finally to Syria where he later began a long and illustrious career as the governor of Acre and southern Syria.³⁸

Immediately after Salih's murder 'Ali Bey moved to consolidate his hold over the government and its revenues. He elevated three more of his mamluks to the beylicate, confided the government of the important province of Girga to his mamluk Ayyub Bey, and named Hasan Bey Ridwan both commander of the pilgrimage (amir al-hajj) and commander of Cairo (amir misr). He also advanced his kushdash Isma'il Bey to the post of defterdar, or head of the Imperial Treasury in Egypt. His most innovative move, however, was to assume the functions of the qa'immaqam, the officer empowered to execute the functions of the governor in his absence.³⁹ In combining the leadership of the mamluk regime with the executive functions of the Ottoman

37. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), September 26, 1768; Jabarti, I, 306-307; Shaykh Ismā'il al-Kashshāb, *Tadhkirat li Ahl al-Basā'ir*, f. 16.

38. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), September 26, 1768; Jabarti, I, 307.

39. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), September 26, 1768; Jabarti, I, 308. Livingstone (" 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 48) says that Venetian consular sources and Jabarti claim 'Ali Bey became qa'immaqam in December, 1768. But d'Amirat, who noted the absence of a governor in September, would not have reported an event three months before it occurred. It is probable that the Venetian consul and Jabarti are referring to 'Ali Bey's resumption of the qa'immaqam's functions after he deposed the newly arrived governor Muhammad Pasha in November, 1768.

government 'Ali Bey had gained complete mastery of the Ottoman administration in Egypt and reduced the governor to impotence.

Holt aptly describes the change in the course of Egyptian history brought about by 'Ali Bey's revolution.

The restoration of 'Ali Bey might seem nothing more than a shift of power among the unstable mamluk factions, but to contemporaries the period of his rule that followed seemed something different in kind from the authority previously exercised by the grandees. In the unprecedented severity of his proscriptions, and in his conscious will to despotism, 'Ali exhibited a sustained and ruthless determination that shocked and surprised Egyptian society.⁴⁰

Everyone now experienced the despotism of 'Ali Bey, who used every means to squeeze from both the tax structure and the rich of each community an ever larger amount to pay for the costly wars he now undertook. When he revolted against the Ottoman government he withheld the annual revenues that were traditionally sent from Egypt for the Imperial Treasury in Istanbul. He also seized the wealth of the enemies he eliminated, some of whom he seems to have murdered or exiled for no other reason than to seize their property. He ruined the rich Jewish community in Egypt and drove the French trading houses into debt. These same extortions against the French merchants in Egypt grew even worse, in the next two decades, under Murad Bey and Ibrahim Bey whose continued harassment forced the French to abandon Cairo and ultimately helped to provoke the French invasion of 1798. The mamluks had always fought their wars among themselves, playing out their roles without involving the majority of Egyptians and foreigners in their struggles. Now, however, society in its entirety was drawn into the maelstrom unleashed by 'Ali Bey. Jabarti was particularly angry that 'Ali Bey had "abolished customs, annulled traditions, brought down ancient families and struck a mortal blow against civil and religious practices. . . ." ⁴¹

The events of September, 1768, curiously laid the foundations of the bayt that was to supplant 'Ali Bey's own house, for Muhammad Bey emerged from this revolution as one of the most powerful mamluks behind 'Ali Bey himself. The brother-in-law of the shaykh al-balad was now permitted to advance his own mamluks within 'Ali Bey's regime. On the day of Salih's murder Muhammad Bey had purchased Murad, who was immediately elevated to the beylicate. 'Ali Bey himself raised Muhammad Bey's khazandar, Ibrahim, to the beylicate

40. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 94-95.

41. Jabarti, I, 258.

at that time and permitted his brother-in-law to acquire the remaining mamluks, probably the ones not yet manumitted, of Salih's fractured bayt. In a prescient statement d'Amirat wrote, "It appears that the only thing that could overthrow him would be a revolt by one of his own slaves. Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab appears to be among those who would have the most to gain by the ruin of his master." 42

Lusignan seems to link a curious series of events with Muhammad Raqim Pasha's attempted coup d'etat against 'Ali Bey in November, 1768. He reports that the Ottoman governor instigated a plot to murder 'Ali Bey and enlisted several unnamed mamluk rivals to set the plan in motion. These mamluks, according to Lusignan's version, attempted to use Muhammad Bey as their instrument. Through huge bribes and promises that he would succeed his master in the dignity of shaykh al-balad, they hoped to induce him to execute their scheme. But after accepting the bribe and showing signs that he would undertake the task, Muhammad Bey revealed the plot to 'Ali Bey and denounced the governor, who was then deposed. According to Lusignan, 'Ali Bey, "instead of increasing his caution, laughed at the design and looked upon Abudahap [Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab] as his faithful friend and servant, and from that moment would not give credit to any report against him." 43

Lusignan includes stories of two other plots by Muhammad Bey to murder his master, although it is not clear if they are both but part of a single plan or whether they, too, are part of the governor's scheme. He is said to have offered 'Ali Bey Tantawi, another of his master's most faithful mamluks, 200 purses to kill the shaykh al-balad while he played chess with him. Lusignan's account suggests, however, that a simultaneous scheme was to be undertaken by 'Ali Bey's own sister, for Muhammad Bey purportedly ordered his wife to put poison in 'Ali Bey's coffee the next time he came to visit. Tantawi immediately informed 'Ali Bey of Muhammad Bey's offer, and 'Ali's sister pleaded with him not to visit her any more. But " 'Ali Bey was so blinded by his love for the treacherous Abudahap, that he disbelieved her also." 44

Lusignan had been ruined by 'Ali Bey's defeat at the hands of Abu al-Dhahab so one can sense a degree of bitterness in these stories, if

42. Cited in Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabîr and the Mamlûk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 43.

43. Lusignan, 88.

44. *Ibid.*, 89.

not of total fabrication. It seems incredible that Muhammad Bey would risk discovery of his plot by using Tantawi and his wife, 'Ali Bey's own sister, as the instruments of any intrigue. Moreover, even if the tale itself is true in broad outline, it was not unusual for masters to test the loyalty of their mamluks by instigating such plots against themselves. Lusignan is the only source for these stories which are found embedded as cornerstones in the subsequent Western histories antagonistic to Muhammad Bey.⁴⁵ We cannot dismiss them with absolute certainty, but we should be wary of accepting much of them as fact.

Now that he was undisputed master of Cairo, 'Ali Bey directed his efforts against the bedouin tribes and exiled factions that controlled several of the strategic provinces to the north and south of the capital. He therefore undertook a series of expeditions whose purpose was to destroy the power of these semi-independent tribes and mamluk factions and to redirect the flow of revenues and agricultural produce toward the central treasury in Cairo. The expeditions that had been dispatched against the provinces in 1768 had not achieved their purpose, for the return of Khalil Bey and Husayn Bey Kishkish had aborted these drives. Muhammad Bey had, however, penetrated deep enough into the Sa'id to extract a treaty granting concessions to 'Ali Bey by Shaykh Humam, head of the powerful Hawwara bedouin confederation and virtual ruler of Upper Egypt, before the appearance of Husayn Bey and Khalil Bey in the delta had forced him to return to Cairo.

The Nisf Sa'd bedouins, whose base was Buhayrah province in Lower Egypt, had been punished by 'Ali Bey in 1768 but once again threatened to interdict traffic between Cairo and the delta. Shaykh Suwaylim had shown his defiance of the Cairo regime by killing 'Ali Bey's kashif (governor) of Buhayrah province, a challenge that could not go unanswered. The mysterious return from Istanbul of Ahmad Bey al-Jazzar and his appearance among the Nisf Sa'd at this time suggest that the Ottomans may have sent him to instigate an uprising against 'Ali Bey's regime. In June, 1769, Isma'il Bey was dispatched with a sizable force against Shaykh Suwaylim and the Nisf Sa'd. After several days of inconsequential fighting Isma'il's mamluks apparently surprised Suwaylim in the tent of a bedouin girl far from the field of combat and beheaded him. The sight of his severed head stuck on the

45. See, for example, Marcel, *Egypte depuis la conquête des Arabes jusqu'à la domination française*, 232.

end of a spear was enough to strike fear in the bedouin warriors, whose ranks quickly dispersed. Ahmad al-Jazzar returned to Syria, where he began an illustrious career, and the bedouins of Lower Egypt no longer caused 'Ali Bey any trouble.⁴⁶

In ratifying Muhammad Bey's treaty of the previous year with Shaykh Humam of the Hawwara bedouins of Upper Egypt 'Ali Bey had stipulated that Humam had to expel all exiled amirs from his domains. Instead, Humam induced the exiles to descend the Nile, seize the strategic town of Asyut, and interdict communications with Lower Egypt. When Ayyub Bey, the kashif of Girga, informed 'Ali Bey that the exiles were in control of Asyut, the shaykh al-balad was obliged to send a large force to eliminate the dissident beys and reestablish contact with the Sa'id. In late March, 1769, Muhammad Bey departed Cairo with a large group of mamluk officers and a sizable force that included mamluk, ojaq, Druze, Albanian, Mutawali (Shi'ites of southern Lebanon), and Syrian Christian troops.⁴⁷

Muhammad Bey encamped his forces outside Asyut, where they were surprised by the numerically inferior army of exiles. Although the dissidents lost this engagement, they were able to withdraw before being destroyed. In joining Humam, who was now unmasked as an active partner in the attempt to block 'Ali Bey's southern expansion, the exiles posed a serious threat to the army of Muhammad Bey as it proceeded into the Sa'id.⁴⁸

Despite their reputation for petulant warfare and eagerness for combat, mamluks preferred to bring down their enemies through intrigue or treachery rather than in an open test of combat where the odds were even and chances of death were high. Volney described their warfare rather well. He wrote:

Their armies are mobs, their marches ravages, their campaigns mere inroads, and their battles, bloody frays; the strongest or the most adventurous party goes in search of the other, which not unfrequently flies without offering resistance; if they stand their ground, they

46. Jabarti, I, 334-335.

47. Ibid., I, 335. In view of the later charge that 'Ali Bey was too close to the Christians and worked with them against the sultan, it is of some interest to find Syrian Christian troops being used in this campaign. See also AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), April 2, 1769, for a report on this campaign. Military cooperation between 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar of Palestine seems to have begun at this time, for the French consul of Tripoli reported that Shaykh Dahir had secretly passed 2400 troops to 'Ali Bey (AN, B1, 1121 [Tripoli de Syrie], June 13, 1770). These Syrian troops mentioned by Jabarti may be the ones cited by the French consul. Syrian troops were also with Muhammad Bey's expedition to the Hijaz.

48. Jabarti, I, 335-336.

engage pell-mell, discharge their carbines, break their spears, and hack each other with their sabres, for they rarely have any cannon; and when they have they are but of little service. A panic frequently diffuses itself without cause; one party flies, the other pursues, and shouts victory: the vanquished submit to the will of the conqueror, and the campaign often terminates without a battle.⁴⁹

Volney's general description of a mamluk engagement is largely substantiated by the testimony of John Antes, a German missionary who lived in Cairo from 1770 to 1782. In warning his readers not to take the mamluk "wars" too seriously he accurately predicted how these conflicts would be viewed at a later date. He writes:

There are still Arabic writers of chronicles at Grand Cairo, who will give the most boasting accounts of a trifling and insignificant fight between the Egyptian Beys, where, perhaps, five or six out of several thousands were killed; which, I am sure, if they should be read some hundred years hence, would appear to be greater battles than any one fought between the King of Prussia and the Austrians in the seven years war.⁵⁰

It seems a valid description of the interminable combats of the mamluks of this period. Although 'Ali Bey sent him significant reinforcements in April, Muhammad Bey now used a tactic in his confrontation with Humam and his mamluk allies that he was to use successfully in numerous subsequent engagements. In secret liaison Muhammad Bey promised the leadership of the Hawwara to Isma'il Abu 'Abdallah, an ambitious cousin of Humam who was susceptible to bribery, if he would cooperate in bringing down the powerful Humam. Isma'il's subsequent defection so weakened the Hawwara-mamluk alliance, perhaps more psychologically than militarily, that Humam felt compelled to withdraw beyond Farshut, where he died in poverty December 7, 1769, without ever having received Muhammad Bey's attack. For the present, Farshut was entered without a struggle in late April, 1769, and everything belonging to Humam was pillaged.⁵¹

Muhammad Bey's campaign in the Sa'id and Humam's death completed 'Ali Bey's pacification of Egypt. The mamluk dissidents were scattered as far as Syria and the humiliation of the Hawwara was compounded by the seizure of their lands and iltizams. Humam's son

49. Volney, I, 126-127.

50. John Antes, *Observations on the Manners and Customs of the Egyptians* (London: 1800), 12. Unfortunately, Antes's small book is almost completely silent on the careers of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey, whose regimes he lived through.

51. Jabarti, I, 336, 343.

Darwish was obliged to take up residence in Cairo, where he could be closely watched. His influence was further reduced by 'Ali Bey's seizure of the extensive awqaf revenues which the Hawwara shaykh had traditionally administered and, presumably, by the cutting off of revenues which Humam had previously received from the Ottoman treasury in Cairo.⁵² Muhammad Bey personally enriched himself through the confiscation of Humam's treasury.

The French consul d'Amirat noted that 'Ali Bey was now the only power in Egypt and that his authority stretched from Alexandria to Upper Egypt.⁵³ Nevertheless, he did not abandon his attacks upon individual mamluks and ojaq troops whom he suspected of disloyalty. As many of his potential rivals as he could lay his hands on were now eliminated. On his orders many of the most important ones who had accepted banishment in such towns as Rosetta, Damietta, Mansurah, or Alexandria were strangled as new exiles were ordered to the provinces. At the end of 1769 'Ali Bey once more installed loyal officers in the various ojaqs in Alexandria.⁵⁴

'Ali Bey was in an awkward relationship with the Ottoman sultan. He had emasculated Ottoman institutions in Egypt, resisted the orders of the sultan, refused to tolerate the presence of a governor, and withheld annual revenues, both the *irsaliyah* and *hulvan*, which Egypt owed to the empire, yet he would never take the final step of officially renouncing Egypt's dependence on the empire.⁵⁵ For his

52. Ibid., 336. Livingstone (" 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 263) found Humam, in addition to the *iltizams* he held in Upper Egypt, received pay from the ojaq accounts.

53. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), September 9, 1769 and January 13, 1770.

54. Jabarti, I, 336; AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), April 21, 1770.

55. Lusignan's memoirs are woven around 'Ali Bey's unsuccessful "revolt" against the sultan and his assumption of new titles. He argues that 'Ali Bey had the revolt forced upon him by the connivance of dissident mamluks who had convinced the sultan through their agents in Istanbul that the troops 'Ali Bey was raising in 1768 were not for the use of the sultan but were to be used in alliance with the Russians, with whom the Ottoman Empire was then at war. The sultan then set in motion his plan to bring 'Ali Bey down through the intervention of the governor in Cairo (see Lusignan, 93-99). There can be no doubt that 'Ali Bey's actions represented a *de facto* revolt against the Ottoman Empire, but revolts such as his are not to be considered independence movements. They were struggles for the control of the revenues of the area. 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir were not interested in attaining the same lofty titles the sultan enjoyed and never took the final step to renounce completely the sovereignty of the sultan or even to assume new titles of their own. 'Ali Bey continued to emphasize his relation to the sultan by the use of such titles as *amir al-hajj* and *qa'immaqam*. Throughout the period of his revolt 'Ali Bey continued to receive the Ottoman chief *qadis* sent from Istanbul despite his

part, the sultan continued to dispatch governors with secret instructions to curb 'Ali Bey's power or to bring him down. But this struggle for the control of Egypt continued to be muted by the frequent exchange of friendly correspondence between 'Ali Bey and the sultan and the continuation of traditional practices such as the granting of robes of honor and the installation of new governors in the citadel. In mid-1769, just when he was deposing the sultan's governor, 'Ali Bey sent the sultan valuable presents and sincere respects.⁵⁶ He had forwarded the required 3,000 troops for service in the Russian war and now received the sultan's request to dispatch troops to the Hijaz.

decision to withhold the required revenues and his unwillingness to tolerate the presence of an Ottoman governor in Cairo.

56. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), April 2, 1769.

'Ali Bey's Elaboration of a New Foreign Policy for Egypt

Having gained almost complete military ascendancy over his many rivals, mamluk, Ottoman, and bedouin, 'Ali Bey was able to impose an unrestrained despotism upon the society of Egypt. Whereas the foreign policy objectives of Muhammad Bey did not substantially differ from those of 'Ali Bey, the distinctive difference in the moods of the two regimes and in the methods employed by each permit them to be handled separately. This chapter therefore devotes itself to the first phase of Qazdughli foreign policy, which begins with 'Ali Bey's second mashyakhah and ends with his death in 1773. The Qazdughli assault upon the bureaucratic structure and the extortions against the various social groupings, policies that would generate the enormous sums of revenues necessary to support the bold new foreign policy first elaborated by 'Ali Bey and then sustained by Muhammad Bey, are treated in the next chapter, where the mashyakhahs of the two Qazdughli amirs are viewed as an uninterrupted period of Qazdughli tyranny and aggrandizement. The second phase of the new Qazdughli foreign policy is reviewed in chapter five.

The mamluk predecessors of 'Ali Bey can be said to have maintained foreign relations with the Ottoman government and several other political entities in their border regions, but it would be difficult to assign to them a coherent foreign policy. Content to satisfy their limited ambitions as officers of the various corps or as beys on the mamluk council, the mamluk leaders remained completely preoccupied with defending their own positions within the ever changing pattern of mamluk, Ottoman, and bedouin military alignments and too beset by domestic enemies to elaborate a rational and comprehensive foreign policy. None prior to 'Ali Bey had been able to break the vicious cycle that kept the mamluk beylicate in a state of almost constant political

turmoil or petty internal warfare. But 'Ali Bey had broken the cycle by overwhelming his enemies and fighting his way to total dominance of the Egyptian province. With all domestic rivals destroyed or checked, he was finally free to concern himself with affairs beyond the immediate borders of his own province. 'Ali Bey, moreover, was no ordinary mamluk leader, for his grand designs reveal an audacious, imaginative, and thoughtful mind. Contemporaries were well aware of his unusual qualities. In addition to the frequent comments upon his baseness, ruthlessness, tyranny, and disregard for tradition one finds occasional evidence of his more positive qualities. Jabarti, for instance, remarked that 'Ali Bey read the history of the mamluk sultans and hints that he was interested in recreating the medieval Mamluk sultanate destroyed by the Ottomans in 1516-1517. This conscious desire to recreate the Circassian state was also noted by 'Abbud Sabbagh, the historian of Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar.¹

For two and one half centuries the mamluks of Egypt had either willingly confined their ambitions, or had had them confined, to the narrow valley of the Nile and the Egyptian delta. Now 'Ali Bey committed enormous revenues and provisions for conquests outside Egypt. 'Ali's vision of the new state was, in fact, almost precisely the territories controlled by the Mamluk sultanate on the eve of the Ottoman conquest 250 years before. Egypt was, of course, to be the base of 'Ali Bey's revived mamluk state. The Red Sea coasts, with their important ports of Jidda and Mocha and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the interior were to form one wing of the new empire. The Levant coast with its numerous active trading ports and the Syrian hinterland with its vital urban centers of Aleppo and Damascus would form the other wing. This empire would be created by the might of 'Ali Bey's newly enlarged armies and sustained by the revival of trade with the European states, whose commercial activities in the area had been expanding throughout the eighteenth century. Specifically, 'Ali Bey saw great advantage in reopening the Red Sea route to the European merchant houses of India. These he would invite to trade directly with Suez, ignoring the long established Ottoman ban against European shipping north of Jidda. He also actively encouraged the British and French and others to increase their trading activities in Egypt and the Levant. While Qazdughli policy aimed at the self-aggrandizement of the bayt, it can also be said to represent the rebirth of a distinctively

1. Jabarti, I, 381; 'Abbud Sabbagh, *al-Rawd al-Zahir fi Tārīkh Dāhir*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, F.A. 4610, f. 15.

Egyptian foreign policy after Egypt's subordination to Ottoman interests for more than two and one half centuries.

The major aspects of 'Ali Bey's foreign policy dealt with in this chapter are his struggle with the Ottoman Empire to achieve autonomy for an expanded mamluk state, the intensification of a broad range of political, commercial, and military contacts with the nations of Christian Europe, and the wars to conquer the Red Sea and Levant coasts.

Upon attaining the leadership of the beylicate in 1767 for the second time 'Ali Bey gave assurances to the minority communities that they had his protection, but he also demanded of them their loyalty and support. 'Ali Bey came to favor Christians, both indigenous and European, as no previous mamluk leader of Egypt had done. He appears to be the first shaykh al-balad with whom the Europeans were able to establish close, though not intimate, contact. Although he pressed them hard to help pay for the enormous costs of his foreign wars and often treated them unjustly, his policies were nonetheless politically and economically beneficial to them. He went out of his way to extend to them protection for their commercial activities, going so far as to severely punish his own officials for injustices done to the Europeans, and struggled to create for them a political climate that would induce them to expand their commercial operations in his territories.

Evidence presented later in the chapter demonstrates that the mamluk beys were themselves reluctant to campaign outside Egypt, so it appears that 'Ali Bey's natural inclinations toward expansion were supported not by his compatriots, but by a small group of Christian advisors with whom he had surrounded himself. Foremost among this small circle of Christian intimates was the Copt, Mu'allim Rizq. It had been a long established tradition for mamluk amirs to use Copts as private secretaries and financial managers. These Copts, having the implicit trust of their patrons, managed the private affairs and knew the most intimate secrets of the houses they faithfully served. But in the eyes of 'Ali Bey's Muslim beys, he had permitted his Coptic secretary to acquire far too much importance. Jabarti says reprovingly that Rizq, who acted as director of finance and astrologer to 'Ali Bey, "had reached, thanks to the authority of his master, a position that a Copt had never attained." Lusignan also reveals that 'Ali Bey permitted Rizq to exalt himself over the beys themselves. He remarked that "when any of the beys went to visit him, he never rose from his seat, but received them as private men. None were so much offended

at this haughtiness as Abudahap. . . ." Consular reports also indicate that nothing could be accomplished without first paying a substantial bribe to the Copt Rizq.²

Rizq appeared more sympathetic to the Venetians than to the French, who had to give twice the bribe of the Venetians to induce Rizq to act on their behalf.³ Rizq found a kindred spirit in the Venetian merchant Carlo Rosetti, who played an important role in Egyptian affairs through the period of the French invasion at the end of the century. Rosetti, who successfully insinuated himself into 'Ali Bey's circle of European friends, frequently played the role of intermediary between 'Ali Bey and the Venetian and Jewish communities and on occasion even acted as a business associate of 'Ali Bey. Like Rizq, Rosetti pressed upon the ambitious bey an expansionist foreign policy that would reap rich economic rewards. Bruce probably exaggerated Rosetti's influence when he remarked that "Carlo Rosetti, a Venetian merchant, a young man of capacity and intrigue, had for some years governed the Bey absolutely."⁴

It is difficult to determine what influence the Greek merchant Lusignan had with 'Ali Bey. The lack of references to him, particularly of complaints, in the consular correspondence would suggest that he was more an agent of 'Ali Bey's policies than a moving force within the circle of his intimate advisors. Lusignan had been resident in Cairo on two previous occasions and had known 'Ali Bey in his youth, but his fortunes had taken him from Cairo for some years until 'Ali Bey, having fought his way to the leadership of the beylicate, requested that Lusignan return to Cairo to enter his entourage. Lusignan did not return to Cairo until 1771, by which time 'Ali Bey's plans for the conquest of Syria were already unfolding. That 'Ali Bey would invite his former acquaintance from abroad indicates the new international world view that 'Ali Bey was developing. Of these three Christians in 'Ali Bey's circle of friends, Mu'allim Rizq and Lusignan were ruined by 'Ali Bey's fall from power, for their political and economic fortunes were completely linked with those of the shaykh al-balad, but Rosetti, by fleeing at a propitious moment and by maintaining an independent economic base as a member of the foreign merchant community in

2. Jabarti, I, 381; Lusignan, 90; AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), September 9, 1769.

3. John Livingstone, " 'Alī Bey Al-Kabīr and the Jews," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 7 (1971), 227 n. 20.

4. Lusignan, 103; Bruce, I, 30. For information relating to Rosetti's career in Egypt see Angelo Sammarco, *Gli Italiani in Egitto* (Alexandria: 1937).

Cairo, was able to return to Cairo in 1778 and resume his activities for several decades after Muhammad Bey's death.

Another group to benefit from the reliance now placed by 'Ali Bey on Christians was the small community of Syrian merchant families that had sought refuge in Egypt a few decades earlier. Their sudden displacement of the Jews as the chief customs officials in the various ports of Egypt is dealt with in the next chapter. Their meteoric rise to prominence was taken by the politically conscious Muslim population as another indication of the dangerous Christian-European orientation that 'Ali Bey's policies were taking. The advisors he sought out, the allies he embraced in his struggle with the Ottoman Empire, and the wars he waged were to be viewed by his own mamluk colleagues and the general Muslim populace as detrimental to the interests of the Ottoman Empire and threatening to the Muslim population of Egypt. Even one of 'Ali Bey's closest advisors from the shaykhly class, the capable Shaykh al-Mahdi, was the son of a Coptic convert to Islam. Ultimately, the characterization of 'Ali Bey's policies as being too pro-Christian would cost him valuable support among the military units and the politically active segments of Cairo's population.

The first foreign area to attract 'Ali Bey's attention was the Red Sea, which had become Egypt's single most important trade route. It was felt, however, that the route could produce even larger profits for Egypt if the European trading houses of India could be induced to redirect their trade away from the Cape of Good Hope to Suez. European trade in the Red Sea had dropped to insignificant proportions by the mid-eighteenth century. So little European traffic was carried by this route that British merchants in India who had previously derived large profits from it were going bankrupt.⁵

The obstacles to the revival of European trade in the Red Sea were formidable. The Ottoman Empire was unalterably opposed to Europeans trading in the northern portions of the Red Sea, for it knew full well the fate of the Asian empires that had permitted the Europeans to establish trading posts: they succumbed to their military superiority. The Ottoman government therefore remained unalterably opposed to the Europeans extending their shipping north of Jidda, the northernmost port in the Red Sea where their presence was tolerated and refused 'Ali Bey's repeated attempts to obtain an imperial firman

5. India Office (London), G/17/3 (Egypt and the Red Sea), April 8, 1771.

permitting the Europeans to unload their cargoes at Suez.⁶ The rulers of Mocha and Mecca, who controlled the two major halting stations of Mocha and Jidda on the route to Suez, were naturally opposed to the Europeans extending their trade to Suez since they derived a considerable proportion of their income from the customs duties paid by the merchants visiting their own ports. To permit the Europeans to sail directly to Suez would have meant a substantial loss for the rulers of Mocha and Mecca. Both had imposed such tyrannical taxes upon foreign merchants, ignoring entirely the rights and protection granted them in the Ottoman capitulations, that the trade had shifted to the route around the Cape of Good Hope. Some of the English merchants of Bengal and the French and Venetian merchants of Egypt were nevertheless eager to break into the lucrative Red Sea trade despite the hazards that faced them along this route, but their aspirations could only be fulfilled if the Ottoman ban upon European shipping north of Jidda could be lifted.

The various merchant groups that were now beginning to explore the possibilities of extending their activities into the Red Sea had more than local opposition to overcome, for their home governments were equally opposed to any commercial activity by their merchants in the forbidden region. Their objections were based more on political realities than upon economic considerations. The statesmen in England and France felt that whatever economic advantages would be gained from opening the Red Sea route would be far outweighed by the political liabilities arising from this activity. Although the European states might have been tempted to support the efforts of their merchants to utilize the port of Suez, they sensed that the risks were too high. For the English in particular, the risk of reprisal against their merchants in other parts of the empire was too great to satisfy a few merchants in Bengal. The French felt largely the same way and discouraged their merchants in Egypt from antagonizing the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul.

England and France were engaged in a worldwide struggle for the control of overseas territories for most of the eighteenth century, but their policies toward the closure of the Red Sea to European shipping and to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire coincided remarkably. They were opposed to Russian expansion into Ottoman domains and were reluctant to support autonomous beys such as 'Ali

6. See Livingstone, " 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 112.

Bey for fear that the central government would be weakened. Both states were already committed to a policy of supporting the Ottoman Empire against its regional enemies, foreign or domestic.

'Ali Bey's drive for autonomy consequently posed serious problems for the European merchant communities in Egypt. Technically, they were protected by the capitulations granted to their communities by the Ottoman government, but local rulers frequently ignored these rights. The only recourse for Europeans in such cases was to protest to the impotent central government, hoping a new firman and the threat of the use of force could ameliorate their problems, or make a private arrangement with the local despot. But the latter course might anger the central government and cause troubles for conationals in other commercial centers of the Ottoman Empire. The first attempt by 'Ali Bey to open the port of Suez to the Europeans illustrates the dilemmas faced by the Europeans when caught up in the conflicts between the Ottoman central government and one of its local rulers.

In 1765, during 'Ali Bey's first *mashyakhah*, the French merchant Meynard sought permission from his government to reopen the route between Suez and India. He suggested that the French deal directly with 'Ali Bey and ignore the protestations of the central government in Istanbul. The Venetian *baylo*, or ambassador, at Istanbul, also sought a firman from the Ottoman government permitting this trade.⁷ But the French government, which was fearful of offending the Ottoman government and reluctant to place any confidence in the mamluk regime in Cairo because of its notorious instability, rejected this idea to reopen the Red Sea route. Its reasoning seemed sound when 'Ali Bey fell from power in 1766.

Once established in the *mashyakhah* a second time 'Ali Bey seriously pursued his plan to open Suez to European shipping. He sought from the Ottoman government a firman raising the restrictions on Europeans north of Jidda and, being unsuccessful, sought to squeeze the necessary firman from Hamzah Pasha, the Ottoman governor in Cairo. Hamzah Pasha resisted 'Ali Bey's demands for some time, but in April, 1768, finally granted 'Ali Bey the required firman, which even went so far as to permit the free import and export

7. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), September 18, 1765; Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 111-112.

8. Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 112, citing the firman in the Venetian archives.

of coffee for European markets.⁸ Knowing that the trade would never be sanctioned by the Ottoman government, the French restrained their natural commercial instincts and abstained from participating in the trade until 'Ali Bey's firman was approved by the sultan, but the Venetians, after some hesitation, plunged into the trade.⁹ In April and May, 1768, coffee was already being brought to Suez on Venetian ships and reexported from Alexandria to Venice. Almost immediately, however, the customs agents complained of considerable losses because of the free passage of coffee and a standard duty of 3 percent was imposed on the trade. The Venetians, who had taken their chances with the Ottoman government, were rewarded for their courage. Despite trepidations, the Venetian consul noted in April, 1769, that the Ottoman government made no response and that 'Ali Bey's firmans were as good or better than the sultan's edicts. The Venetian trade in the Red Sea was expanding in a rational manner and the Venetian consul saw no obstacles to the export of coffee for 1769.¹⁰

Although 'Ali Bey had demonstrated his autonomy of the Ottoman sultan in several forceful ways, namely, by refusing to tolerate the presence of an Ottoman governor in Egypt and by his decision to withhold the sending of the annual *irsaliyah* payment to Istanbul, he could not yet in early 1769 be said to have gone into rebellion against his sovereign. He did not renounce his ties to the empire, and it was not unusual for provincial governors to be in arrears with their annual payments. After all, as already noted, 'Ali Bey continued to send presents and felicitations to the sultan and did produce the required annual levy of 3,000 troops for service with the armies of the empire. A fortuitous combination of events now provided 'Ali Bey the opportunity to expand his influence beyond his own borders under the cloak of performing the sultan's own tasks. In going beyond the sultan's limited objectives, however, 'Ali Bey would declare his true intentions and thus provoke a serious crisis with the Ottoman government. The incident that gave 'Ali Bey his first opportunity to operate outside the boundaries of his own province occurred in 1769 when the sharif of Mecca died just as 'Ali Bey was in the midst of his plans to develop the Red Sea trade.

9. Livingstone (*Ibid.*, 113) notes that the Venetian consul sent a copy of Hamzah Pasha's firman to the baylo in Istanbul as a precaution against possible troubles with the Ottoman government.

10. *Ibid.*, 115, citing the reports of the Venetian consul in Cairo.

After the death of the sharif, recognized ruler of Mecca and its surrounding territories, a contest for the succession broke out between two rival branches of the Hashimite house of Arabia. 'Abdallah, the defeated candidate, proceeded to Istanbul where through the usual bribes he obtained from Sultan Mustafa Khan III a letter that authorized 'Ali Bey to give him help in securing him the contested position.¹¹ As Egypt was traditionally responsible for the protection of the holy cities of the Hijaz and sent a large annual pilgrim caravan with a sizable armed escort, this request by the sultan was not in itself unnatural. The arrival of 'Abdallah in Cairo with the request for aid from the sultan fit perfectly into 'Ali Bey's emerging plans: an extensive empire of his own, carved from the Ottoman Empire and based on trade with the European nations. 'Ali Bey could hardly resist the invitation to invade the Hijaz since it not only laid the foundation of his new state but came from the sultan against whom he was presently in conflict. The timing, too, was fortuitous, for Egypt had been entirely pacified and 'Ali Bey could with confidence send his troops to foreign soil. And since he was fighting the sultan's rebels he was authorized to raise extraordinary taxes for the expedition and deduct his expenses from the taxes owed the Ottoman government. For 'Ali Bey at that moment the campaign in the Hijaz was irresistible.

'Ali Bey had apparently been convinced of the value of the Arabian expedition by the advice of Rosetti and Rizq, both merchants. Rosetti convinced 'Ali Bey of the enormous financial rewards to be gained by seizing the Hijaz and securing control of the Indian trade that could be directed through Egyptian ports on its way to Europe. At the same time Rosetti prodded 'Ali Bey into offering friendship to the maritime trading state of Venice, which since 1768 had been bringing its ships to Suez. As reward for his role in formulating this venture Rosetti won for himself and his brother Balthazar the right to establish a trading house in Jidda once the Hijaz was conquered. The latter would represent the interests of the firm and act as director of the Jidda customs.¹² Rosetti also urged his plan on Mu'allim Rizq who, playing on 'Ali Bey's belief in astrology, pointed out that the signs were propitious for the expedition against the Hijaz.¹³

11. Jabarti, I, 350. Bruce (I, 273) claims that everyone knew in 1769 that 'Ali Bey had intentions to invade the Hijaz the following year.

12. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), December 3, 1770; Lusignan, p. 103.

13. Lusignan, 103. Jabarti (I, 381) informs us that Nu'man Afandi, 'Ali Bey's Turkish secretary, was also his astrologer.

The general command of the Arabian campaign was given to Muhammad Bey, by this time commander of 'Ali Bey's armies. Acting in the capacity of amir al-hajj, Muhammad Bey left Suez in May, 1770, at the head of land forces while Hasan Bey departed with a small fleet for Jidda.¹⁴ The Egyptian forces were everywhere victorious as they penetrated the Hijaz. News of the defeat of the bedouin forces of the incumbent sharif Ahmad reached Cairo on July 16, followed on August 2, 1770, by the confirmation that Muhammad Bey had occupied Mecca. 'Abdallah was installed as the new sharif of Mecca and Muhammad Bey seized another sizable fortune as reward for his endeavors. Meanwhile, Hasan Bey took Jidda (hence the sobriquet al-Jiddawi).¹⁵

Sources are not in agreement on the titles 'Ali Bey assumed after his Hijaz venture. Lusignan, followed by Savary, but unsupported by any other source, claims that the new sharif gave 'Ali Bey the title Sultan of Egypt and of the Two Seas (Red and Mediterranean).¹⁶ That title would have placed 'Ali Bey on virtually the same level as the Ottoman ruler himself, but there is no evidence that 'Ali Bey was granted such a title by the sharif of Mecca. Unsupported reports reaching Istanbul also carried the disturbing news that the new sharif used 'Ali Bey's name in the Friday khutbah prayer in Mecca, which would mean that he recognized 'Ali Bey's sovereignty over the holy city. Although neither claim is substantiated by other sources, we know that 'Ali Bey's name was used in the khutbah in Cairo on at least one occasion and that he minted money bearing his own marks.¹⁷ But there is no concrete evidence that he ever took an Ottoman title more imposing than that of qa'immaqam.

Some consternation spread throughout Istanbul's diplomatic community in the summer of 1770 when a report reached the capital

14. Jabarti, I, 350. Livingstone (" 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 118) says Venetian sources put the date of departure between April 27 and May 27, one month earlier than the date given by Jabarti.

15. Jabarti, I, 351. Apparently the campaign was not entirely without problems for the Egyptians. The French ambassador in Istanbul reported that Muhammad Bey had lost many troops on his return march to Cairo. Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Quai d'Orsay, Paris), hereafter AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 155, April 17, 1771.

16. Lusignan, 104. Yet the British ambassador in Istanbul could find no evidence of 'Ali Bey's assumption of any new titles after the Arabian campaign. See PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 46, 104, June 16, 1770.

17. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 48, 116, report of July 3, 1770; Jabarti, I, 336-337, 371.

that 'Ali Bey had struck coins in his own name.¹⁸ In addition to the usual denominations the Cairo mint was authorized to issue, 'Ali Bey had struck coins of new denominations and the traditional coins bearing an unusual impression. On one side of the coins he placed the *tughra*, stylized name, of the reigning sultan, Mustafa Khan III, as was the custom, but on the obverse, instead of the usual date commemorating the year of Sultan Mustafa's accession (1171/1757), 'Ali Bey inscribed the number 83 (signifying 1183/1769), the actual date of issue. He also placed his own initial, 'ayn, so that in harmony with the *b* of the word *duriba* (struck or minted) it formed the full name of 'Ali, but in an unusual manner. Neither practice was unheard of, for coins bearing initials in addition to the name of the ruling sultan circulated freely in the Ottoman Empire, and the coins struck in Istanbul during Sultan Mustafa's reign usually showed the actual date of issue rather than the customary date of accession.¹⁹ But the first appearance in 1769 of 'Ali Bey's coins using a new dating and bearing his name, albeit in a cleverly stylized manner, coincided with his refusal to accept an Ottoman governor; it seemed to his contemporaries a clear declaration of his own sovereignty and an indication of his ultimate ambition. 'Ali Bey's coins can be seen as symbolic of the relationship he seemed determined to forge with the Ottoman Empire. He recognized Egypt's continued adherence to the Ottoman Empire and the position of the sultan within that state (symbolized by the *tughra* of the sultan upon one side of his coins) but claimed autonomy for his own province (symbolized by his own name on the obverse).

To reap the rewards of his ambitious Hijaz campaign 'Ali Bey gave specific orders to his commanders for the development of the Indian trade. The port of Jidda was repaired to receive the ships 'Ali Bey hoped would soon be induced to visit his domain. He also gave specific orders to his commanders not to molest European traders they might encounter in the Red Sea ports. On the contrary, they were to actively give them every assistance and assurance that they could safely increase their trade through the Red Sea and Suez.²⁰ It was at Jidda

18. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 46 (1770), 116, July 3, 1770.

19. For a discussion of this coinage see Samuel Lachman, "The Coins Struck by Ali Bey in Egypt," *The Numismatic Circular*, 83 (1975), 198-201, 336-338; and Husayn 'Abd al-Rahmān, *al-Nuqūd* (Cairo: 1939), 124. Both sources provide pictures of some of the famous coins. Ramaḍan (*'Alī Bey al-Kabīr*, 59) states that all official documents emanating from 'Ali Bey's government between 1768 and 1772 bore a special seal without the name of any governor.

20. Lusignan, 103.

that British merchants of Bengal made contact with 'Ali Bey's mamluks and raised the possibility of sending their ships direct from India to Suez. The result of these initial contacts was the formal agreement Muhammad Bey signed with James Bruce in 1773 and the arrival of British ships in Suez in 1775. These events are discussed in chapter five. The seizure of Jidda had relieved European traders of a vexatious set of restrictions and rapacious taxes on their goods and it was hoped that 'Ali Bey's new regulations would entice European merchants, French, Venetian, and English, to redirect or increase their trade in this region. But they were not the extent of 'Ali Bey's bold plans for the revival of the Red Sea trade.

Venetian sources claim that Muhammad Bey had instructions to conquer as far down the Arabian coast as Mocha and Yemen. 'Ali Bey also made an agreement with the French to build an aqueduct linking the Nile to the Red Sea at Suez, so one begins to understand the enormity of the benefits he hoped to derive from his Hijaz venture. Few of 'Ali Bey's plans materialized however. According to the same Venetian sources, Muhammad Bey returned from the Hijaz prematurely, much to 'Ali Bey's disgust.²¹ The sharif 'Abdallah could not long maintain himself without the support of an Egyptian garrison and was soon driven out by the supporters of his rival Ahmad. A canal linking the Red Sea with the Mediterranean would not be built for another century, and European powers refused to increase their trade through the Red Sea, despite urging from their own merchant communities who were eager to answer 'Ali Bey's calls. In the end the exigencies of world politics demanded that European states work for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire as a barrier to the expansion of the Russians into the Middle East and not abandon the privileges they enjoyed in the Mediterranean ports of the empire for hoped-for profits in the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the attempt to revive the Red Sea trade continued to interest 'Ali Bey's successors. Muhammad Bey and Murad Bey signed treaties with European companies to attract their trade through the ports of Suez and Alexandria, and Muhammad 'Ali Pasha would penetrate Arabia as far eastward as the Persian Gulf

21. Livingstone, " 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 119 and 169. See also David Kimche, "The Opening of the Red Sea to British Ships in the late Eighteenth Century," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 6 (January, 1972), 65; Edward Ingram, "From Trade to Empire in the Near East, Part I, The End of the Spectre of the Overland Trade, 1775-1801," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 14 (May, 1978), 4.

under the pretext of crushing the Wahhabis on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.

Muhammad Bey returned to Egypt from the Hijaz in the first days of Rajab, 1184 (October-November, 1770), by which time 'Ali Bey was engaged in nothing less than the conquest of Palestine and Syria.²² It seems from all that transpired that the invasion of the Hijaz, as important as it was in 'Ali Bey's grand design, was of secondary importance to his major objective, the conquest of Palestine and Syria, preparations for which had proceeded fiftully for over a year and a half. As early as February, 1769, 'Ali Bey had given a hint of his developing interest in the affairs of Syria when he petitioned the sultan to depose 'Uthman Pasha of Damascus on the flimsy excuse that that governor was harboring Egyptian exiles.²³ Then in February, 1770, d'Amirat ordered the French consul of Acre to deliver to Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar 10,000 piasters on 'Ali Bey's account in payment for Shaykh Dahir's recruitment of troops for 'Ali Bey.²⁴ This transfer of funds demonstrates the extent to which the two leaders were already committed to joint operations. Even as the Hijaz campaign was unfolding, the Cairo consular community was made ominously aware of 'Ali Bey's greater ambitions when in July, 1770, he requested modern artillery pieces from, of all sources, Venice and the Knights of St. John of Malta, two Christian powers with a long history of hostility toward the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ These revelations give some indication of the lengths 'Ali Bey was willing to go in soliciting help from Christian states in his conflict with the sultan; they also help to explain the growing antagonism within Egypt to 'Ali Bey's reliance on Christian powers.

French consular correspondence reports shortly afterward that 'Ali Bey asked for artillery experts.²⁶ That year a French artillery officer by the name of Moisson appeared in Egypt, and a few months later a

22. Jabarti, I, 351.

23. Ibid., 309. Muhammad 'Ali Pasha would use a similar excuse six decades later as a pretext for his invasion of Syria.

24. AN, B1, 1034 (Seyde), March 6, 1770, citing d'Amirat's letter of February 12, 1770. Amnon Cohen has personally informed me that a bulletin dated March 30 found in J-799 (Seyde) in the *Chambre du Commerce*, Marseilles, makes clear that the 10,000 piasters was for the recruitment of troops. Although Dahir eventually demanded 25,000 piasters of the French consul, he settled for 4,000 debited against customs charges at Acre (B1, 1034 [Seyde], April 4, and April 18, 1770).

25. See Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 129.

26. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), September 18, 1770.

Florentine officer arrived. More European officers were to arrive shortly.²⁷

Eventually 'Ali Bey was able to attract to Egypt a mixed group of eleven European engineers and artillery experts, but they made little impact upon the tactics or effectiveness of his mamluk armies. Cannons were built, and the European officers were sent off to advise the artillery units that were part of 'Ali Bey's armies, but their presence seems to have had little effect upon their use by 'Ali Bey's commanders. Muhammad Bey is reported to have placed his artillery so close to the walls of one city that musket fire from the defenders picked off his gunners. Then when he aimed his cannons at the citadel in Damascus he overshot his target and wrought considerable damage to the residential quarter behind the citadel, whereupon the citizens of Damascus, who had already surrendered, petitioned him to cease fire on the few remaining defenders trapped in the citadel.²⁸

'Ali Bey's European military experts had little chance to effect any changes in his army before he was driven from Egypt by Muhammad Bey in 1772. It appears Muhammad Bey then acquired the services of most of this group, for he is reported to have taken seven Europeans on his second campaign into Syria in 1775. These included two Englishmen, two Ragusans, one Dane, and two of unspecified nationality. Of them, only two names are known, the Englishmen Harvey and Robinson. By far the most important of the group, and the best known, was Robinson, the Englishman who passed himself off as a renegade fleeing from some dark misdeed but who in reality was a British intelligence agent by the name of Captain Jones.²⁹ Robinson played a key role in preparing and commanding Muhammad Bey's artillery for the second Syrian campaign. At the same time he sent a steady stream of intelligence to French as well as English officials on Muhammad Bey's developing campaign against Shaykh Dahir. After Muhammad Bey's death he and his companions were captured by Shaykh Dahir, who demanded a ransom of 50 purses for the release of the Englishmen. Robinson and Harvey eventually saved themselves by entering

27. Livingstone, " 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 129-130.

28. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 269; Volney, I, 146-147.

29. PRO, SP (Turkey), Box 47 (1771), 139, June 3, 1771; Box 51 (1775), 28-29, March 4, 1775, 77, August 17, 1775; AN, B1, 93 (Alep), copy of a letter written to M. Abbott, consul of England at Aleppo, June 21, 1775.

Dahir's service, and Robinson finally found his way back to Cairo where he was employed by Isma'il Bey.³⁰

The mamluks never learned the proper use of artillery. Although they often transported it with them on campaign they seldom employed it to practical advantage. The charge of the individual cavalier, operating in collaboration but seldom in unison with his comrades, remained the preferred method of attack up to the period of their destruction by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in the early nineteenth century. Unsuccessful though it was, the employment of foreign military advisers by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey represented a fundamental realization on the part of the Qazdughli leaders of the superior techniques and technology of the Europeans. In this respect, too, the mashyakhahs of the two amirs represent the dawn of a new era in the relations between Egypt and the West. The appearance of European officers in the mamluk armies was not unique, however, for the Ottomans too had turned to European experts for advice and instruction in military affairs.

Conditions in the Ottoman Empire in 1769-70 favored intervention in Syria by 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir, for an incredible series of crises had stretched the capabilities of the empire to the breaking point and threatened it with dismemberment. Karim Khan of Persia appeared on the verge of seizing southern Iraq, including the important entrepôts of Basra and Baghdad, and smaller revolts in Asia Minor and the European provinces dissipated imperial strength in these Ottoman heartlands. But these problems were overshadowed by the disastrous and humiliating war of the Ottoman Empire with Russia that would drag on from 1768 to 1774. It therefore seemed impossible that the empire could find the resources with which to resist a drive by 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir into Palestine and Syria. To further humiliate the Ottomans, in July, 1770, a Russian fleet under the command of Count Orlov suddenly appeared in Mediterranean waters and destroyed the greater part of the Ottoman navy at Çeşme before driving the battered remnants into Asiatic harbors. For the next several years this Russian squadron, manned mostly by island Greeks, cruised eastern Mediterranean waters at will, intervened at points along the Asiatic and Levant

30. PRO, SP (Turkey), Box 51 (1775), 77, August 17, 1775, 82, September 4, 1775, and 85, September 18, 1775. Mure noted that the English officer in charge of Muhammad Bey's artillery (Robinson) provided good information on the taking of Jaffa and saved the French *facteur* by taking him into his tent and then ransoming him (AN, B1, 335 [Le Caire], June 6, 1775). See also Gabriel Guémard, *Les réformes en Egypte d'Ali Bey El-Kebir à Méhêmet-Ali: 1760-1848* (Cairo: 1936), 63.

coasts, and disrupted European and Ottoman commerce in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.³¹ After 'Ali Bey's expulsion from Cairo in 1772 and his retreat to Palestine he and Dahir al-'Umar would offer port facilities and supplies to this squadron in return for military aid. But while the Russians received 'Ali's proposals for an alliance with sympathy, they failed to intervene effectively on his behalf.

'Ali Bey had acquired a formidable ally in the octogenarian Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar, the indefatigable campaigner who had built his modest patrimony into a respectable power in Palestine. Aided by his seven sons, Shaykh Dahir had gained hegemony over most of Palestine and in 1768, according to Mariti, had won from Istanbul the title "Shaykh of Acre, Prince of Princes, Commander of Nazareth, Tiberias, Safad and Shaykh of all of Galilee."³² Dahir, like 'Ali Bey, was in open revolt against his sovereign, but his position was more precarious because of the presence of still powerful Ottoman forces in Syria and several Palestinian towns such as Jerusalem and Jaffa. With his sons in command of strategic fortresses in Palestine, Dahir could offer 'Ali Bey not only a sizable contingent of fighting men, but a secure bridge-head from which 'Ali Bey could launch his main assaults against the interior. His control of the important port of Acre permitted 'Ali Bey to provision his forces by sea instead of hauling his supplies over the difficult land route between the Egyptian delta and Palestine.

The alliance between 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir seems to have been conceived of their mutual ambitions, to have gestated over a period of years, and to have been born at the moment when circumstances appeared most favorable for the success of their joint undertaking. Shaykh Dahir had first developed a friendship with 'Ali Bey when the latter had sought refuge in Ghazza in 1766. Evidence referred to also suggests that Dahir raised Syrian troops for 'Ali Bey's campaigns into Upper Egypt and the Hijaz in 1769 and 1770. He proved a faithful friend to the end of 'Ali Bey's days, gave him sage advice and refuge on several occasions, and sent two of his own sons in 1773 in the futile attempt by 'Ali Bey to regain the mashyakhah he had lost to his

31. Heavy losses suffered by French trading houses at the hands of the Russian squadron and pirate ships determined the French government in 1775 to dispatch four frigates, each accompanied by smaller ships, to eastern Mediterranean waters. Two were stationed along the Morea and the Dardanelles, the third took up station between Stancho and Cyprus, and the fourth protected shipping along the Levant coast. The appearance of this squadron had a salutary effect upon French commerce. See AN, B111, 11 (Maisons de Commerce de Marseille), July 3, 1775.

32. Mariti, *Istoria*, 81.

brother-in-law. But by linking his destiny to 'Ali Bey's, Dahir sealed his own fate. He survived 'Ali Bey by only two years, for 'Ali Bey's expulsion from Egypt exposed him to the vengeance of the sultan and led directly to his own defeat and death in 1775.

The major objective of the allies' projected campaign was Damascus, the center of Ottoman administration for Palestine and Syria and one of the great capitals of the Ottoman Empire. Its governor was 'Uthman Pasha, who had crossed swords with 'Ali Bey in 1764 when the two had led the pilgrim caravans from their respective capitals. Then, in 1766, 'Uthman had threatened to drive 'Ali Bey from his Ghazza refuge. This governor commanded sufficient forces to contain their ambitions, so the two rebels saw 'Uthman as the major obstacle to the realization of their aspirations.

The Syrian campaign was opened in November, 1770, when 'Ali Bey sent 'Abd al-Rahman Agha at the head of a small force to Ghazza, where through trickery he was able to kill the powerful bedouin Shaykh Salit, and with him his brothers and children. This force having secured the route to Palestine, a few days later 'Ali Bey dispatched Isma'il Bey with a large army. After making the traditional halt at al-'Adilyah, Isma'il continued his advance into Palestine, joined Shaykh Dahir, and began to clear Palestine of garrisons loyal to the sultan. On November 11, Sulayman Bey 'Umar Kashif departed from Damietta by sea with yet another force.³³

As events were to prove, 'Uthman Pasha was a formidable and tenacious enemy. Intending to defeat the allies arrayed against him before they could consolidate their strength, he moved into Palestine and gained initial successes against Isma'il, but was forced to withdraw to Damascus upon the appearance of Dahir's main force.³⁴ Although Isma'il and Dahir gained control of most of Palestine and established themselves in southern Syria by the end of December, they did not press their advantage against 'Uthman, who busied himself with the defense of Damascus and preparations for the expedition of the annual caravan to Mecca.

French consular correspondence reveals that 'Ali Bey gave explicit instructions to his commanders not to molest the Christians or European merchants of the conquered territories. He is reported to have sent two letters extending his protection to the fathers of Terre Sainte and to French merchants Isma'il had found in the captured

33. Jabarti, I, 351.

34. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 253-254.

towns of Ramla and Jaffa. Much to Shaykh Dahir's growing annoyance, Isma'il kept his forces in the vicinity of Ramla for the better part of January and February, 1771.³⁵

'Uthman Pasha meanwhile departed Damascus in January, 1771, and successfully escorted the pilgrim caravan to Mecca. Isma'il positioned his forces at Muzayrib on the pilgrim route to intercept 'Uthman, but the governor successfully returned to Damascus with the caravan on May 23, having taken a little known detour around Muzayrib.³⁶ The unwillingness of Isma'il Bey to attack either Damascus, which he felt would bring the wrath of the sultan upon him, or the pilgrim caravan when 'Uthman Pasha was most exposed, is crucial for an understanding of the role Isma'il Bey would later play in the conflict between Muhammad Bey and his master. The Syrian historian Rafeq argues that Isma'il Bey had religious scruples against attacking 'Uthman Pasha on pilgrimage and involving innocent pilgrims in the battle. Isma'il's reluctance to attack his enemy, despite Dahir's urgings, led to complaints against him and forced 'Ali Bey to send another large army under a new commander, which it appears he was already preparing to do.³⁷

Several pieces of unverified evidence discussed below may help to explain the sudden turn 'Ali Bey's fortunes were about to take. Venetian consular sources report a growing feud between 'Ali Bey and his young commander. They first noted that 'Ali Bey had been piqued by Muhammad Bey's premature return from the Hijaz campaign. They also reported a strange flare-up between 'Ali Bey and his brother-in-law. "It appeared," said one report, "that this bey desired to elevate himself too much, and disdained to show any dependence on his master." In early February, 1771, Muhammad Bey is said to have publicly refused to bow or give any sign of respect in meeting his master on the bank of the Nile at Bulaq. It is also reported in the Venetian correspondence that he first refused to accept the command of the Syrian army.³⁸ Perhaps he was exhausted from his recent

35. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), January 4, 1771; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 254-257.

36. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), February 4, 1771, May 2, 1771, May 31, 1771; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 257-261.

37. Rafeq (*The Province of Damascus*, 257-260), suggests that the new army dispatched by 'Ali Bey was in response to Dahir's complaints against Isma'il Bey's reluctance to engage the enemy.

38. These reports are cited by Livingstone, "'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 169-171.

Hijaz campaign or simply did not want any longer to campaign outside Egypt. Or was it possible he was already aware that 'Ali Bey's position was to a great extent the product of his own efforts? French consular correspondence contains nothing to suggest any ill will between master and mamluk at this time. If the Venetian reports are correct they shed the first light on the conflict that would later flare up between 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey.

It appears, therefore, that it was with some reluctance that Muhammad Bey departed Cairo at the head of a large army on April 19, 1771. After a difficult march he arrived at Ramla on May 11, where he was ceremoniously met by the eldest son of Shaykh Dahir.³⁹ Whether through illness or the infirmities of age, whether he felt a necessity to stay in Acre to continue preparations for an expected attack by 'Uthman Pasha's allies, or through intent, the old man himself failed to appear in Muhammad Bey's camp. His absence contrasted sharply with the solemn respect he had shown to Isma'il Bey upon his arrival in Dahir's domain. French archival sources and Lusignan remark the importance of the slight that Muhammad Bey now felt.⁴⁰ The Egyptian commander appears to have been a very proud young man, easily offended. We have seen how he was annoyed by the manner in which the Copt Rizq dealt with him. Dahir's slight, whether intended or a mere oversight, would cost the old warrior dearly later, but for the present Muhammad Bey continued to campaign with Dahir's sons.

Between April and May, 1771, Muhammad Bey's forces cleared 'Uthman's partisans from all of Palestine with the exception of Jerusalem, Sidon, and a few well-fortified towns. On June 2 the combined forces of Muhammad Bey, Isma'il Bey, and Dahir al-'Umar and their allies reached the outskirts of Damascus, which had been reinforced by the arrival of the pashas of Killis, Aleppo, 'Ayntab, and Antioch and an estimated 25,000 troops.⁴¹ The struggle for Damascus was decided on June 3 when the pashas went out to meet

39. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), June 24, 1771. D'Amirat reports that Muhammad Bey's army was hit by the plague. He also asserts that the mamluks did not know how to transport cannons and abandoned 50 along their march (ibid., May 31, 1771). Lusignan (108) gives March 4 as the departure date, but all his dates are in error from this point, sometimes by as much as several months.

40. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), May 31, 1771; Lusignan, 112.

41. AN, B1, 91 (Alep), April 12, 1771, June 1, 1771, June 11, 1771; B1, 1035 (Seyde), June 12, 1771; B1, 1121 (Tripoli de Syrie), June 12, 1771; Rafeq (*The Province of Damascus*, 260-262) places their number considerably lower.

the rebels and were soundly beaten. In the next two days the allies probed the Damascus defenses in a desultory manner while bombarding the city with the cannons Muhammad Bey had managed to bring from Egypt. Meanwhile the pashas and their relief troops from the northern towns fled the capital, leaving Damascus defended by citizens of the city and 'Uthman Pasha's troops. The evening of June 6 'Uthman Pasha himself fled, yet Muhammad Bey withheld his main attack upon the city.⁴² His hesitation appears a deliberate tactic to win the city without a bloody struggle, for to this date he had made no serious attempt to overwhelm by force the weakened defenses of the city. He hoped that the mere pressure he put on the city would cause his opposition to disintegrate and give factions within the beleaguered capital time to decide that the best course was to open the gates of the city to him.

'Ali Bey had issued a proclamation to the ulama of Damascus in which he explained that the sole purpose of his campaign was to relieve Syria of the tyranny of 'Uthman Pasha.⁴³ The shaykh al-balad used the usual formulas in his proclamation. He emphasized his subservience to the sultan by referring to himself as former amir al-hajj, *amir al-liwa al-sharif al-khaqani* (commander of the sultan's noble banner, Arabic for sanjaq bey), and qa'immaqam of Egypt. He stressed his concern for justice, supported by appropriate references to Allah's love of justice, and asked the people of Damascus to join him in putting an end to 'Uthman's tyranny. Seeing their cause lost by the desertion of most of the Ottoman troops, the citizens of Damascus surrendered the city to Muhammad Bey on June 8, 1771. Only a small Ottoman troop that continued its defiance from the citadel remained to be overcome.

Rafeq notes that Muhammad Bey did not punish the people of the city, that he accepted the recommendations of the Damascene ulama in

42. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), June 11, 1771; B1, 91 (Alep), June 11, 1771; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 263-266.

43. In addition to the copies whose texts are reported in the Arabic chronicles and reported by Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 255-257, see the following copies preserved in Western sources: An Arabic copy is found in AN, B1, 91 (Alep), July 6, 1771. A French translation is found in B1, 1121 (Tripoli de Syrie), June 12, 1771. Mariti (*Istoria*, 193-201) offers an Italian translation of the proclamation. It was also reported from Istanbul that 'Ali Bey had petitioned the sultan to depose 'Uthman Pasha. See AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 155, March 18, 1771.

making his appointments to a new administration.⁴⁴ He does not seem to have wanted to deviate from custom or the sacred law at this time.

The power of the mamluk beylicate of Egypt was now at the zenith it had not enjoyed since Qansuh al-Ghuri had lost Syria in 1516 as Damascus was in mamluk hands and the way to Aleppo was open. Yet 'Ali Bey's grandiose scheme collapsed in suddenness, the powerful bayt he created disintegrated into hostile factions, and his career took a jolting turn when Muhammad Bey inexplicably abandoned his conquests by withdrawing his forces from Damascus only ten days after accepting the surrender of the city. He then began a pell-mell retreat to Cairo. Nothing was left of the Egyptian presence in Palestine and Syria as he loaded all his provisions and equipment on ships at Acre and Jaffa and returned them to Damietta.⁴⁵

Muhammad Bey's sudden withdrawal from Damascus not only appears to be the focal point in the lives of both master and former slave, but emerges as a pivotal incident in the history of Syria, Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire. It therefore deserves special attention.

Numerous reasons were advanced by contemporary sources to explain Muhammad Bey's unexpected withdrawal from Damascus. The least plausible are the ones that cite the inability of the Egyptian forces to expel the remnants of the Ottoman garrison from the Damascus citadel and the presence of Ottoman relief troops close to Damascus. The former could have been rooted out, and Muhammad Bey, who was a commander of unusual ability, could certainly have expected reinforcements of his own from Cairo in the event a new Ottoman army marched on Damascus. A note in the French correspondence from Egypt suggests that this was only the excuse used by Muhammad Bey himself to explain his withdrawal to 'Ali Bey.⁴⁶

Another set of explanations suggests Muhammad Bey received false intelligence that prompted him to return to Egypt with the greatest possible speed. From Tripoli it was reported that Muhammad Bey had received news that nine exiled beys of the Sa'id were about to descend

44. Rafeq (*The Province of Damascus*, 260-268) recreates a vivid picture of Muhammad Bey's attack upon Damascus. See also Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad Khalīl ibn 'Alī al-Murādī, *Sīk al-Durar fī A'yān al-Qarn al-Thānī 'Ashar* (Bulaq: 1310 (1883-1884), I, 54-57, for an eyewitness account, and AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), June 11, 1771.

45. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 28, 1771, July 10, 1771.

46. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 156, July 17, 1771; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 271-277; AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), September 1, 1771.

on Cairo and drive 'Ali Bey out.⁴⁷ In the confusion following the Egyptian retreat from Damascus, a very wide range of sources reported the rumor of 'Ali Bey's death.⁴⁸ These explanations could have some basis, for it was not unknown for opponents to introduce spies into the enemy camp to disseminate false intelligence. Although the latter explanation is highly unlikely, it is the only one to satisfactorily account for the precipitous speed with which Muhammad Bey returned to Cairo. As is shown in the fifth chapter, the death of Muhammad Bey on campaign in 1775 sent his army racing back to Egypt as if chased by a host of demons. The more plausible explanations for Muhammad Bey's withdrawal all fail to account for the pell-mell nature of what can only be called the army's flight back to Egypt. Yet the false report theory does not account for Muhammad Bey's refusal of 'Ali Bey's orders to return to Syria.

It is possible to elucidate a combination of pressures that influenced Muhammad Bey to abandon his conquest and to suggest the reasons for his retreat, but the crucial question of whether his withdrawal marks the beginning of a treasonous plot to overthrow 'Ali Bey is not answerable on the basis of available evidence. Rafeq mentions in his outstanding review of this episode at Damascus that the Lebanese chroniclers refer to the role that Isma'il Bey played in Muhammad Bey's precipitate action. He is said to have expressed to Muhammad Bey his fear of Ottoman retaliation for the attack upon Damascus, noted the ambitions of Dahir and his sons, reminded him of Dahir's slight, and mentioned the cooperation between 'Ali Bey and the Christian powers seeking the destruction or dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹ One should not dismiss Isma'il's fears lightly, nor the impact they had on Muhammad Bey, who throughout his career gave every indication of being faithful to the principles of Islam. Although it was seriously weakened, the Ottoman Empire still had troops at its disposal with which to defend its heartland and means with which to deal with rebellious pashas. Isma'il's reluctance to attack Damascus or 'Uthman Pasha on pilgrimage was demonstrated

47. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 47 (1771), 213, citing a report from Tripoli.

48. Ibid., 189, August 3, 1771, 197, August 17, 1771; AN, B1, 91 (Alep), July 16, 1771. In AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 156, August 3, 1771, there is the report that 'Uthman informed the Ottoman government (erroneously, as it turned out) of 'Ali Bey's death.

49. Isma'il's role is noted in the anonymous British Museum manuscript, F.A. #1694, *Nuzhat al-Zamān fī Hawādith Jabal Lubnān*, f. 46. See also Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 272.

in the earlier campaigns in Palestine and Muhammad Bey was to prove at a latter date his own loyalty to the sultan and his opposition to Christian religious influence in the area, so the argument must carry some weight. The enormity of their crime must surely have dawned on the victorious mamluks, for they had seized one of the important cities of the Ottoman Empire and had invaded territory that was not as remote or as easily defended as Egypt or Arabia. But Isma'il's fears and Muhammad Bey's religious scruples are not enough in themselves to have caused Muhammad Bey to withdraw from Damascus.

Although Rafeq mentions the reasons for the withdrawal offered by Jabarti, he does not give them the importance they deserve. According to Jabarti, 'Ali Bey responded to the news of the conquest of Damascus with an order to Muhammad Bey to name governors for the conquered provinces from among his mamluk colleagues and to continue his campaign until all of Syria was pacified. This much is verified in French consular correspondence.⁵⁰ 'Ali Bey promised his commander that reinforcements and supplies for the new campaign would flow without interruption, but instead of obeying the commands that had been received, Muhammad Bey consulted the beys on campaign with him, most of whom were his own mamluks and kushdashiyah, on the course they should follow.

If the Venetian sources cited earlier are correct, Muhammad Bey was reluctant to campaign in Syria in the first place. Jabarti's report of the divan that he held with the beys makes it apparent that Muhammad Bey had already determined to depart from Syria and used the session to convince his army to return with him. After being assured that they would obey him in whatever he decided, he swayed them with the arguments that 'Ali Bey was asking them to live far from their own country (Egypt) and that as they completed one campaign they would be given orders to undertake another, then another. He then urged them to return as one man to their country, their task in Syria ('Uthman Pasha's expulsion) having been completed. If 'Ali Bey had other conquests in mind, let other beys undertake them. As for himself and his colleagues, let them return to their homes to seek rest from their fatigues in the bosom of their families. The beys thereupon unanimously accepted their commander's interpretation of their situation and agreed to return to Cairo.⁵¹

50. Jabarti, I, 365; AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), Bulletin from d'Amirat, June 24, 1771.

51. Jabarti, I, 365.

While it is true that Jabarti was reconstructing a discussion that was held in Damascus, his general reliability in these matters and the soundness of the arguments he reported give his version a ring of truth missing from other contemporary accounts. That the mamluks felt themselves to be in a strange and hostile environment close to the sultan's forces and spread amongst powerful clans and tribes whose loyalty they could not trust cannot be denied. They had been on campaign in the service of 'Ali Bey for two consecutive years in Upper and Lower Egypt, the Hijaz, Palestine, and Syria, yet they were asked to continue their conquests deeper into the Ottoman heartlands where resistance was sure to be heavier and retaliation certain. Muhammad Bey therefore asked for a pause in their campaigns and an opportunity to seek respite among their families. Perhaps there was also a growing resentment among the beys that they were risking their lives for 'Ali Bey, who no longer took the field himself but nevertheless reaped the rewards of their efforts. There can be no doubt that the mamluks felt Egypt was their special province and that Egypt, not Syria, offered the brightest future for their ambitions. They did not have the vision and ambition of 'Ali Bey, so could not appreciate the great undertaking in which they were involved. In their eyes, being posted to Syrian governorships was an effective means of exiling them and cutting them off from their own sources of strength.

So far, Jabarti's account seems to be close to the truth, but now a sizable group of historians, particularly those writing in the nineteenth century, advance what may be called a conversion theory to explain Muhammad Bey's retreat from Syria. It rests on the assumption that while in Damascus Muhammad Bey was convinced to take up arms against 'Ali Bey in return for Ottoman promises that he would succeed to the dignity and wealth of his master. A rather strong case can be made for this plot theory, but it rests on circumstantial evidence. It depends on the report that Ottoman agents had conversations with Muhammad Bey at Damascus and through threats, promises, and bribes succeeded in sending him into precipitous retreat from the capital and into rebellion against his master.⁵²

Circumstantial evidence points in this direction. Following a logical

52. PRO, SP (Turkey), Box 47 (1771), 206, citing a report from the consul of Acre. From Sidon it was reported Muhammad Bey had secret correspondence with 'Uthman Pasha while at Damascus. See AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), March 18, 1772. Mariti (*Istoria*, 246) also speaks of 'Uthman Pasha corrupting Muhammad Bey with bribes and promises.

line of assumption, Rafeq suggests that Muhammad Bey had become conscious of his own military prowess and was perhaps rankled by his subordinate position to 'Ali Bey. He therefore turned against him. Rafeq notes that Muhammad Bey issued a series of letters to the Damascenes in which he asserted that he was obedient to the sultan and had only come on the orders of 'Ali Bey to expel 'Uthman Pasha from Damascus. Before the combat for the city, however, he had haughtily declared that his master 'Ali Bey had appointed him governor of Damascus. Now he seemed to change his stance. Some sources even claim that Muhammad Bey sought confirmation of his conquest from the sultan. On his march back to Cairo he is said to have told the mufti of Jerusalem that he had been forced to attack Syria. He criticized the folly of 'Ali Bey, the cowardice of 'Uthman Pasha, and the deceit of Dahir al-'Umar.⁵³ Rafeq concludes, "that Abu l-Dhahab became conscious partly through fear and partly through personal interest, of his allegiance to the Sultan and consequently disowned the expansionist policy of 'Ali Bey, is almost certain."⁵⁴ This appears to be a sound conclusion, but it fails to fully explain the timing and manner of the conflict that erupted between 'Ali Bey and his chief commander subsequent to the retreat, does not satisfactorily explain the whirlwind speed with which the Egyptian army withdrew into Egypt, and leaves unanswered the question of whether Muhammad Bey was merely disowning his master's expansionist plans or had formulated a plot to assume his master's position. Nor does it explain Muhammad Bey's continuing interest in Palestine and his own invasion of that region in 1775.

Those who accept the plot theory point to several other pieces of circumstantial evidence that seem to indicate at least the exchange of correspondence between Muhammad Bey and the Ottoman government. A French report, unsupported by any other source, ties Muhammad Bey's expulsion from Cairo a few months after his return to the discovery of a plot against 'Ali Bey and to the exchange of secret correspondence between Muhammad Bey and the Ottoman government.⁵⁵ This argument is certainly strengthened by the recently discovered evidence that in 1771 Muhammad Bey had been assigned

53. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 274-276. Murādī (*Silk al-Durur*, I, 56) mentions that Muhammad Bey told the Damascene leadership that Damascus belonged to the sultan.

54. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 276.

55. AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), March 5, 1772.

the iltizams of Nablus, Ghazza, Ramla, and Jaffa (see chapter five). Was this payment for his treason against 'Ali Bey? The supporters of the plot theory also point to the speed with which the sultan recognized Muhammad Bey's assumption of his master's position after their civil war and the quick submission that Muhammad Bey made to the sultan, which included the acceptance of a governor and the remittance of three years arrears of *irsaliyah* payments which 'Ali Bey had withheld since 1769. But, as is pointed out below, there is another body of evidence to cast serious doubt on this plot theory.

The evidence is sufficient to support the theory that Muhammad Bey had undergone some form of conversion in Damascus, but was the conversion one in which he merely repudiated his master's policies or one in which he became involved in a plot to work for the destruction of his master's bayt? Unless Ottoman sources can be found to conclusively demonstrate that Muhammad Bey had definitely accepted an offer to bring down his brother-in-law in return for special favors which the Ottoman government would grant, the plot portion of the conversion theory must be rejected. Jabarti, for instance, does not mention it and French consular reports suggest that a misunderstanding erupted between 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey over the ambitions of a mamluk 'Ali Bey had previously exiled and whom Muhammad Bey elevated to a high position within his own bayt. The most that can be said, on the basis of available evidence, and from what we know of Muhammad Bey's subsequent relations with his master, is that Muhammad Bey no longer favored 'Ali Bey's policies of dependence upon Christian powers, expansion to Syria, and war with the Ottoman Empire.

Muhammad Bey's withdrawal from Damascus not only exploded 'Ali Bey's dreams for the conquest of Syria but exposed Shaykh Dahir to the wrath of the Ottoman government, which now determined to punish its rebels and regain control of the important territories lost in the recent fighting. Reports from Istanbul carried the news of a massive Ottoman counterattack in Syria and Palestine and there was even talk of an army being prepared for an assault on Egypt.⁵⁶ None of these rumored armies ever materialized, however, so it was left

56. AAE (*Correspondance Politique—Turquie*), Vol. 156, August 17, 1771, September 17, 1771. The French ambassador first reported that 'Uthman Pasha had offered 50,000 purses to succeed 'Ali Bey, then that he had been named governor of Cairo and was to march on Egypt (*ibid.*, August 17, 1771, March 17, 1772; AN, B1, 441 [Constantinople], September 17, 1771).

to the local pashas to initiate the offensive against Dahir and his allies.

Immediately upon Muhammad Bey's withdrawal Dahir dispatched letters by sea to inform 'Ali Bey of the stupefying news of his commander's abandonment of their conquests. He pointed out the intolerable position in which he and his allies now found themselves and demanded that the Egyptian army be sent back to Syria before 'Uthman Pasha could begin his expected offensive.⁵⁷ For the rest of his days 'Ali Bey committed himself to the reconquest of Palestine and Syria and to his alliance with Shaykh Dahir, but events in Egypt were to condemn his efforts to failure.

According to French sources, Muhammad Bey arrived in Cairo on June 30, where he had a vehement confrontation with his master.⁵⁸ Over the next few months the young commander refused repeated orders to lead the army back to Syria where Dahir was now hard pressed to defend himself against 'Uthman Pasha and local forces loyal to the sultan. In the meantime 'Ali Bey rushed Dahir whatever aid he could under the circumstances. This consisted largely of cash for the purchase of provisions, small contingents of troops, and continued promises of the return of his army. Immediately upon Muhammad Bey's unexpected return 'Ali Bey had dispatched his confidant, the Copt Rizq, to assure Dahir of his intention to return the army to Syria. Rizq discussed plans for the new campaign and delivered cash sums for Dahir to lay in provisions for the renewed struggle. Informed sources expected the imminent return to Palestine of an even larger Egyptian army under the command of 'Ali Bey's nephew, Ridwan Bey.⁵⁹

Despite continued preparations for its departure, the army did not stir, for 'Ali Bey could not risk returning his troops to Syria while he was faced with a smoldering crisis within his own bayt. Instead of the army that Dahir required, 'Ali Bey sent small quantities of supplies and token forces. These demonstrated, however, his determination not to abandon his ally or his plan for the conquest of Syria.

In October, 1771, seventeen ships loaded with provisions left Damietta for Jaffa, which at that time was still in Egyptian hands. At the same time Mustafa Bey Jawish (Jawish is the Egyptian equivalent

57. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 47 (1772), 206-207.

58. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), July 10, 1771. This report claims bloodshed was threatened but that officers intervened to calm the beys.

59. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 47 (1771), 206, September 17, 1771, citing a report from Acre, Dahir's capital; AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), July 13, 1771.

of Çavuş) led a contingent of 700-800 men to Ghazza by the overland route.⁶⁰ 'Uthman Pasha was deposed in this same month and was succeeded by Muhammad Pasha al-'Azm. But the Ottoman government was mistaken in thinking that Muhammad Pasha would press the attack against the rebels with greater determination than 'Uthman had shown and after one year relieved him of his post. Throughout this period Dahir and his sons held their own against the Ottoman forces. Although they lost some districts to forces loyal to the empire, they nevertheless maintained control of the important coastal districts and their harbors. 'Ali Bey resumed the dispatch of supplies and small groups of soldiers as the new year began, but these were insufficient to turn the tide of battle in Dahir's favor.⁶¹ In February, 1772, an unidentified Egyptian bey and his troops were reported operating in the environs of Sidon. This could have been 'Abd al-Rahman Bey, who with 1,500 Egyptian troops cooperated with Dahir in the siege of Nablus in April.⁶² By then, however, these operations were completely overshadowed by the contest for power that had broken out in Egypt between 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey.

Despite the formal professions of mutual friendship that marked their daily contacts, a spirit of suspicion and mistrust began to drive the two beys apart.⁶³ It is possible that the conflict that now erupted between them was more the product of mutual mistrust and growing misunderstanding than the result of a plot Muhammad Bey was hatching against his master. Mure, d'Amirat's successor as consul in Cairo, wrote later that a mamluk by the name of Isma'il Agha was the principal reason for the misunderstanding that now drove master and mamluk apart.⁶⁴ Isma'il Agha was the brother of 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi, former shaykh al-balad. When 'Ali Bey Balut Kapan secured the mashyakhah from 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi in 1760 he exiled Isma'il Agha to the Sa'id, where he lived for many years. On his campaign into Upper Egypt Muhammad Bey had met Isma'il Agha and, contrary to 'Ali Bey's wishes, took him into his service, returned

60. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), November 9, 1771. The news of Mustafa Jawish is contained in a letter dated October 22, 1771, included in B1, 91 (Alepp), November 17, 1771.

61. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 48 (1772), 4, January 3, 1772, and 13, January 7, 1772. Sidon was temporarily lost to Ottoman forces, then regained by the allies.

62. AN, B1, 92 (Alepp), contains a letter of February 18, 1772, citing this intelligence. Also AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), Bulletin of April 30, 1772.

63. Jabarti, I, p. 365.

64. AN, B1, 336 (Le Caire), January 16, 1776.

him to Cairo, and eventually made him one of his *katkhudas*.⁶⁵ While it is possible that the advancement of Isma'il Agha angered 'Ali Bey, it hardly seems likely that he could become the sole cause of the terrible conflict that now forced Muhammad Bey into rebellion against his master.

It seems far more likely that 'Ali Bey came to realize that Muhammad Bey was becoming a serious rival. He was the second bey in importance, influence, and wealth after the shaykh al-balad himself and now refused to obey his master's orders. 'Ali Bey had lost confidence in his young commander over the incident of his retreat; now his continued refusal to return to the campaign could only make his master question his loyalty. As opposition to his own pro-Christian policies grew within his bayt and the general population 'Ali Bey must have become increasingly aware of Muhammad Bey's broad popularity among the masses and must have understood that he symbolized alternative leadership and policies. Such reflections certainly did not escape French and English observers, who noted that 'Ali Bey's protection for the Christians was causing much discontent in Egypt and that Muhammad Bey had the favor of the masses.⁶⁶ D'Amirat, however, grossly underestimated Muhammad Bey, who he said was but the emanation of his master and incapable of undertaking much by himself because he lacked the proper spirit and was too youthful.⁶⁷

65. Isma'il Katkhuda represented Muhammad Bey in Istanbul during the fateful second Syrian campaign in 1775. Upon his patron's death he returned in haste to Cairo to engage in the struggle for the succession. He attached himself to Murad Bey, but joined the forces of Isma'il Bey al-Kabir, Hasan Bey al-Jiddawi, and Yusuf Bey at a crucial moment. For this reason Isma'il Bey al-Kabir, who became shaykh al-balad, raised him to the beylicate. According to French sources, his ambitions finally led to his undoing. He was disgraced by Yusuf Bey, but then cooperated with Isma'il Bey to eliminate Yusuf. Later he was discovered to be plotting the death of Isma'il Bey and was ordered strangled. For items on his career see the following sources: AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), June 3, 1758, reports an early incident where Isma'il Agha disfigured a French watchmaker with whom he had a dispute. He is also mentioned in B1, 336 (Le Caire), January 16, 1776. The Baron de Tott reports his involvement in the struggle for power following Muhammad Bey's death (B111, 233 [Levant—Mission de Tott], August 18, 1777, November 15, 1777, December 24, 1777). Isma'il Katkhuda is reported in B1, 970 (Rosette), September 24, 1773, to have had Muhammad Bey's blind confidence. He was important enough to have been given a bribe by the French to curry his favor. Jabarti (II, 20-21) carried his obituary. Two court documents from *A.H.* 1188 and 1190 identify him as the *katkhuda* of Muhammad Bey (Shari'ah Court Archives [Cairo] [hereafter SCA], al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 200, 14, 12; SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 283, 279, 197).

66. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 47 (1771), 242, December 17, 1771; AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), September 1, 1771.

67. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), February 28, 1772.

Muhammad Bey's popularity with the masses and a large segment of the beys could only increase 'Ali Bey's estrangement from his favorite mamluk. According to Volney, who claims to have heard the story from Rosetti himself, though it is not clear if it relates to this period, 'Ali Bey asked the Italian one day, "Have the sultans of the Franks (Europeans) children as rich as my son Muhammad?" Rosetti replied, "No, Seignor, they are careful of that, for they think that when children become too great, they are often in haste to enjoy their inheritance."⁶⁸ Such talk could only feed the doubts that now must have dissipated the reservoir of goodwill 'Ali Bey had for his brother-in-law.

Despite the French reports of Muhammad Bey's involvement in a plot with the Ottoman government, referred to earlier, there is still no firm evidence to prove that the conflict that erupted between 'Ali Bey and his favorite was the result of an attempt by Muhammad Bey to depose his master.⁶⁹ The bey had been in Cairo for six months since the retreat, time enough for 'Ali Bey to have discovered his intentions. Every source reporting the conflict that now flared up between the two beys agrees that it was 'Ali Bey who raised their dispute to the level of violence. The shaykh al-balad's action betrays a familiar pattern.

Several versions of Muhammad Bey's exile exist; all insist 'Ali Bey initiated the action against his brother-in-law.⁷⁰ Mure and Mariti claim that Muhammad Bey was sent into exile without incident. Volney agrees that he fled to the Sa'id without a fight, but only because a plot to murder him at the gates of Cairo had failed. Jabarti relates a slightly different version, but agrees with Volney that 'Ali Bey attempted to murder his mamluk. According to Jabarti, on the night of January 10, 1772, 'Ali Bey sent 'Ali Bey Tantawi and others to attack Muhammad Bey in his residence. But Muhammad Bey and his companions fought their way to the city gates and proceeded to Upper Egypt where they eventually joined the other mamluks who had been sent there in exile.⁷¹ Muhammad Bey's expulsion from Cairo

68. Volney, I, 131.

69. AN, B1, 442 (Constantinople), May 18, 1772, citing a report from Alexandria.

70. Jabarti, I, 365; Mariti, *Istoria*, 249-250; Volney, I, 131-132; Shaykh al-Kash-shāb, *Tadhkirat li Ahl al-Baṣṣā'ir*, f. 17; PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 48 (1772), 53, April 17, 1772; AN, B1, 442 (Constantinople), copy of a letter from Auguste in Alexandria dated April 29, 1772.

71. Jabarti, I, 365.

destroyed the very foundations of 'Ali Bey's extensive bayt, for Muhammad was followed into exile by the beys of his own house. To rebuild his shattered bayt 'Ali Bey raised seven of his mamluks to the beylicate. Jabarti, who relates that these new beys were called the "seven sisters" because of their youth and inexperience, erroneously connects their elevation to the incident of Isma'il Bey's defection two months later.⁷²

The open conflict that now developed between the shaykh al-balad and his former commander split 'Ali Bey's bayt in two, for the break that appeared at the top spread throughout the entire structure. 'Ali Bey had permitted his brother-in-law to enrich himself through the seizure of the wealth of his fallen rivals and had raised him to a position second only to his own within the bayt. He had permitted Muhammad Bey to acquire numerous mamluks of his own and out of friendship for his beloved brother-in-law had himself raised several of them to the beylicate. The two factions were so intimately interrelated that it was no longer possible to separate them without doing mortal harm to the bayt.

Once Muhammad Bey arrived safely in Girga the dissident mamluk and bedouin bands still scattered in the Sa'id began to gravitate around him in the hopes of regaining their former positions. Several beys and their retinues appeared in his camp, including representatives of the Hawwara, whom Muhammad Bey had himself crushed in 1769. These now saw an opportunity to take their revenge against 'Ali Bey. But before Muhammad Bey could assemble a sufficient force with which to descend the Nile, assuming this would eventually be the course he would follow, 'Ali Bey initiated a second overt attempt on his life.

Following his return from Syria in the army of Muhammad Bey, Ayyub Bey had once more been dispatched to the Sa'id as the kashif of the important province of Girga. When Muhammad Bey arrived in that province Ayyub entered Muhammad Bey's camp and gave public assurances of his fidelity to the kushdash under whom he had served on numerous campaigns. 'Ali Bey now sought to destroy Muhammad Bey through the treachery of Ayyub, to whom he offered Muhammad

72. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), February 28, 1772. D'Amirat indicates the expulsion may have been in February, for he says it came only a few days before his writing. PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 48 (1772), 53, April 17, 1772, claims that the consul of Syria reported 'Ali Bey had strangled three beys and ordered the death of Abu al-Dhahab. See also Jabarti, I, 366-367. But Jabarti does not report the obituary of any beys for that year.

Bey's position and wealth in return for his assassination. But Muhammad Bey was on his guard and his spies had intercepted 'Ali Bey's offer and Ayyub's acceptance of the proposal. The next day, after he had once more elicited the sworn allegiance of Ayyub Bey, Muhammad Bey inquired of Ayyub what punishment he would give a man who perjured himself. Ayyub replied that he would cut out the tongue that lied and the hand that had falsely sworn upon the Qur'an, whereupon Muhammad Bey asked him if he had received a letter from 'Ali Bey and whether he had made any reply. Ayyub denied either receiving a letter or making a response, whereupon Muhammad Bey produced first the letter then the courier with whom Ayyub had negotiated. He then pronounced upon the dumbfounded mamluk the very judgment that he himself had announced was the sentence befitting perjury. Jabarti remarks that it was Muhammad Bey's intention to return a mutilated Ayyub to his master, but after having his right hand amputated and his tongue cut out Ayyub Bey succeeded in throwing himself into the Nile and drowning.⁷³ The severity of the punishment seems to have convinced doubters of the irrevocable course and intensity the conflict between 'Ali Bey and his mamluk had taken, for many mamluks, including those of Ayyub Bey and some of 'Ali Bey's, now attached themselves to Muhammad Bey's cause.

About the end of February, 1772, 'Ali Bey sent Isma'il Bey with a large force against Muhammad Bey. But Isma'il, who had shared many campaigns with Muhammad Bey and was known to have strong religious sentiments, was a poor choice to attack Muhammad Bey. The bonds of loyalty were not as strong between Isma'il and his kushdash 'Ali Bey as they would have been had Isma'il been 'Ali Bey's own mamluk. Instead of attacking his colleague, Isma'il Bey convinced the majority of his force to submit to the leadership of Muhammad Bey and took them into his camp.⁷⁴ 'Ali Bey was badly shaken by the news of Isma'il's defection, but nevertheless managed to raise a new army and to establish defensive positions, which included trenches and cannons, between the Nile and the mountains at al-Basatin, just outside the

73. The incident of Ayyub Bey's unfortunate end was amazingly well known and accurately reported in French, Italian, and Arabic sources. See Jabarti, I, 366; Mariti, *Istoria*, 250-252; AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 157 (1772), contains a long letter from Auguste in Alexandria dated April 29, 1772, in which the events surrounding Ayyub's death are reported.

74. Jabarti, I, 366. See also AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 22, 1772, May 11, 1772; B1, 110 (Alexandrie), August 9, 1772. A copy of the report from Alexandria appears in B1, 442 (Constantinople).

southern walls of Cairo. It must have been with some trepidation that he dispatched 'Ali Bey Tantawi in late April, 1772, with another army that he had somehow been able to raise, for he must have wondered about the loyalty of his forces. Tantawi's army was easily turned aside by Muhammad Bey's combined forces, who had begun their descent of the Nile. Jabarti noted that the followers of 'Ali Bey's previous victims were especially aggressive and valiant during the brief engagement with Tantawi's army.⁷⁵

Muhammad Bey finally established his camp on the opposite side of the Nile from Dayr al-Tin, where 'Ali Bey waited in one of his residences. But he still hesitated to attack his master. It is impossible to say whether Muhammad Bey refrained from attacking at this point out of respect and loyalty to 'Ali Bey or whether he was waiting for the show of strength and resolution to cause 'Ali Bey's forces to desert their patron. When the latter occurred the shaykh al-balad withdrew during the night of April 28, 1772, to Cairo, where he loaded his treasury and possessions and fled toward Palestine with his remaining mamluks.⁷⁶ After pillaging and burning Dayr al-Tin Muhammad Bey entered Cairo and began to reorganize, as is shown in the next chapter, the government of Egypt. But let us first complete the history of the relations between Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab and his master.

'Ali Bey lost a good portion of his baggage and, according to some sources, was separated from most of his treasure on his flight to Ghazza, which he reached on May 8.⁷⁷ He joined his friend and ally, now his protector, Shaykh Dahir, in Ramla on the 15th of May. For

75. Jabarti, I, 367 and 371.

76. Ibid., 371. Murāḍī (*Silk al-Durar*, I, 56) mentions only that Muhammad Bey, after fleeing from Cairo to the Sa'id, gathered the troops around him and chased 'Ali Bey to Acre. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 157 (1772), contains a copy of Auguste's letter from Alexandria dated May 10, 1772, reporting this news. See also AN, B1, 442 (Constantinople), for another copy. Although Lusignan (119) claims 'Ali Bey fled with 7,000 troops, a report from Seyde estimating his strength at no more than nine beys and 800-900 men seems closer to the truth (AN, B1, 1035 [Seyde], May 11, 1772).

77. A major mystery surrounds the disappearance of 'Ali Bey's treasure, which seemingly had been entrusted to Mu'allim Rizq. Rizq, who is said to have accompanied between 15,000 and 20,000 purses, was reputedly trapped in Damietta. He appeared several months later in 'Ali Bey's camp, but without the money, which he claimed was stolen from him by bedouins (AN, B1, 1035 [Seyde], June 20, 1772). AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 157 (1772), contains a long letter of August 3, 1772, entitled News of Syria in which this information is found. Lusignan (119 and 139) and others thought Rizq had buried the treasure. For the next three years Muhammad Bey tried unsuccessfully to lay his hands on this enormous treasure, which was rumored to have been transported to Acre.

some time he remained ill in his camp, but then resumed the campaign with Dahir and his sons to reestablish their control over the territories lost to hostile forces and to regain access to all the important revenues of these provinces.

Venetian sources report that only a few weeks after 'Ali Bey had fled Egypt he petitioned Muhammad Bey to let him take up residence in a delta village, just as he had done following his first exile in 1766. According to these sources, Muhammad Bey was willing to consent to his return, but only on the remittance of the sizable payment of 7,200 purses, a sum Muhammad Bey was reputedly anxious to forward to the sultan.⁷⁸ The only thing that is certain is that 'Ali Bey campaigned in Palestine for the next eleven months, so it is impossible to substantiate these reports.

The allies did not have sufficient revenues or forces to carry the attack to Syria, but they were able to defend themselves in Palestine. Yet they knew that eventually the weight of the empire would seriously strain their limited resources, so they renewed attempts to enlist the aid of the Russians against their common enemy. Negotiations with Count Orlov, who remained with his squadron in his Aegean haven, proceeded cordially, but he was precluded from intervening in their behalf by an armistice which his government had signed with the Ottoman Empire. When the armistice was broken only four months after its signing Orlov was free to aid the allies against the empire. But Lusignan, who was present at most of the negotiating sessions with Orlov's lieutenants, sadly remarked that despite the frequent declarations of friendship which passed between the two sides, the promises of Russian military aid, which was to include the transport of 3,000 Albanians for the use of the allies, were never fulfilled.⁷⁹ The most the Russians did was to disrupt shipping along the coast, bombard the town of Beirut, and participate for a time in the siege and bombardment of the city of Jaffa.⁸⁰

In an effort to deprive the beleaguered allies of necessary supplies and foodstuffs Muhammad Bey interdicted all traffic, by land and sea, between Egypt and Palestine. He also spread financial chaos in their territories by withdrawing the new coins that 'Ali Bey had minted,

78. Cited by Livingstone, " 'Alī Bey al-Kabīr and the Mamlūk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 166.

79. Lusignan, 131.

80. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), November 29, 1772; B1, 110 (Alexandrie), August 6, 1772, report damage done by the Russian squadron. Beirut was attacked on June 18, 1772. See Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 293.

whereupon the coins, which were widely used in Dahir's domains, lost the major proportion of their value.⁸¹ During this stage of the contest between the two beys the Nile port of Damietta assumed major significance as the chief point of exchange for the traffic between Egypt, the Levant, and the empire. Despite Muhammad Bey's stern warning not to carry supplies to the Levant ports, numerous captains, particularly French, found trade with the rebels too rewarding to abandon. These illegal deliveries now placed French trade in some danger.

Muhammad Bey was becoming increasingly annoyed by the frequency with which supplies were reaching the allies from Egypt. In late March, 1773, he therefore issued a firman warning the French consul that if this prohibited trade continued he would seize French goods and arrest the guilty captains. At the same time he ordered the French interpreter Venture de Paradis to Damietta as vice-consul with strict instructions to put a halt to the prohibited French trade with Levant ports and issued him a warrant for the arrest of a French captain known to have transported a cargo of rice to Acre.⁸²

The test of will between Muhammad Bey and the allies came to center on the strategic city of Jaffa, which the allies had lost and were determined to reduce by siege. While the allies controlled the land side of the city, its port remained open. Muhammad Bey now attempted to strengthen Jaffa's resistance by sending supplies to the city by this route, aware, perhaps, that the fall of the city would provide the necessary base for an attempt by 'Ali Bey to return to Egypt. As long as Jaffa remained in hostile hands it would be risky for 'Ali Bey to attempt to return to Egypt across Ghazza and Sinai, for his extended supply lines would be exposed. In September, 1772, Muhammad Bey was reported to be arming four ships to raise the siege of Jaffa. These are probably the vessels that reached Jaffa in November. The same ill wind that forced a Russian flotilla to abandon its station off the coast and to seek refuge in Haifa's harbor permitted three of the Egyptian ships loaded with provisions and munitions to slip into Jaffa safely.⁸³ But these efforts were not enough to overcome the allies' determination to take the city, which finally

81. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), June 2, 1772; July 20, 1772; Jabarti, I, 371.

82. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 1, 1773, contains a copy of the firman translated into French.

83. AN, B1, 1035 (Seyde), September 26, 1772; November 29, 1772. A report in this correspondence of September 29, 1772, mentions the news that Muhammad Bey would send an army of 40,000 against the rebels of Palestine.

succumbed to famine and capitulated to the allies in February, 1773, after an eight-month siege.⁸⁴

It was apparent to 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir that their respective fates were mutually dependent. If their combined forces could consolidate their position in Palestine, then 'Ali Bey might hope to gather a force sufficient to regain his paramount position in Egypt. From this base he could protect his ally Dahir and with the revenues of Egypt launch new campaigns into Syria. His failure to regain Egypt would leave them in an exposed position, for they would be hard pressed to resist both the hostile forces gathering in Syria and the powerful mamluk army of Egypt if it should reappear in Palestine. It was this fear of being crushed between the hammer of the empire and the anvil of Egypt that induced 'Ali Bey to make a heroic attempt to wrest Egypt from Muhammad Bey's control.

Considering the obstacles to be overcome and the size of the force arrayed against him, the prospects for 'Ali Bey's return to Egypt were dim. The melancholy mood that must have prevailed in his camp was punctuated by the arrival of Shaykh 'Abdallah of Mecca, who had been driven from the city following 'Ali Bey's flight from Cairo, and by the dramatic appearance of Rizq, unrecognizable in the rags he wore, without the treasure that had been entrusted to his safekeeping.⁸⁵ The former was received with honors, and the latter was excused of his failure and surprisingly returned to his master's favor. Despite the depression that his condition must have created, mamluk fortunes often took illogical turns, and 'Ali Bey could recall his previous successful return from a similar exile. Muhammad Bey, too, must have been aware of the challenge posed by 'Ali Bey, even in his presently reduced state. As long as 'Ali Bey remained outside his grasp and on campaign he posed a threat to the stability of his own regime, for 'Ali Bey offered an alternative to that regime. He might become a rallying point for dissident mamluks or a rival put forward by the Ottoman Empire at an appropriate time. Like the literary figure of Hajji Baba of Isfahan, an isolated and exiled mamluk amir might still, through some favorable intervention of Fate, find himself once more raised from the depths of despair to the pinnacle of success. As long as he had breath, therefore, 'Ali Bey could hope that some fortuitous change of fortune would once more place him at the head of a powerful and victorious bayt.

84. AN, B1, 1036 (Seyde), February 17, 1773.

85. Lusignan, 137-140.

A friendly muse miraculously seemed to be beckoning him when in early 1773 letters began to arrive in his camp from dignitaries in Cairo. This correspondence spoke of the growing disillusionment of the people and the soldiery with Muhammad Bey's regime, which was pictured as tyrannical. It also predicted that the people and the soldiery, particularly the Mustahfizan, would rally to his cause once he appeared in Egypt.⁸⁶ 'Ali was convinced the letters genuinely reflected the actual state of affairs in Cairo and rejected the opinions of his advisers that they were clever forgeries whose purpose was to entice him into a trap. He therefore gathered what forces he could and determined to march on Egypt. Considering the obvious insufficiency of his force, which is said to have numbered between 3,000 and 6,000, his return to Egypt takes on the character of a quixotic errand, the more so because the letters were indeed false, having been written for the purpose of convincing him to make a premature return to Egypt.⁸⁷ They had in fact been initiated by Muhammad Bey, who, Jabarti says, himself dictated answers to all of 'Ali Bey's subsequent inquiries.⁸⁸

The way to Egypt was opened by 'Ali Bey Tantawi, who seized al-'Arish in late March, 1773.⁸⁹ 'Ali Bey then moved across Sinai into the delta with his main force in April. When news of the approach of 'Ali Bey's army reached Cairo Muhammad Bey collected a powerful army with which to meet his brother-in-law. Curiously, reports suggest that Muhammad Bey's regime was indeed threatened by 'Ali Bey's approach and that the incumbent shaykh al-balad had some difficulty in rallying the troops to his standard. The Mustahfizan at first refused to march with him and there was even talk of his taking flight.⁹⁰ These reports seem exaggerated, however, for Muhammad

86. Jabarti, I, 417-418; Lusignan (142) mentions that the Janissaries promised to open the gates of the city to 'Ali Bey.

87. French sources place his strength at about 3,000. AN, B1, 1036 (Seyde), Bulletin of November 30, 1773, said his army of 3,000 was reduced daily by desertions. From Cairo d'Amirat estimated his force at about 2,800 (AN, B1, 335 [Le Caire], May 5, 1773). Lusignan (144) is rather specific, but probably inaccurate. He puts 'Ali Bey's strength at over 6,000, including 2,000 cavalry, 250 mamluks, a few hired horsemen, 3,400 Maghribis, 500 horsemen under Shaykh Salibi, and 160 horsemen under Shaykh Karim. All three sources agree that Muhammad Bey's army was close to ten times the size of 'Ali Bey's.

88. Jabarti, I, 417-418; Volney, I, 134-135.

89. AN, B1, 1036 (Seyde), April 22, 1773.

90. Lusignan (148) says the Janissaries refused to fight; Jabarti, I, 417; Volney, I, 134-135. European sources speak of general discontent with Muhammad Bey's government. A report from d'Amirat mentioned the general instability of Muhammad Bey's regime. See AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), May 5, 1773. A British report from

Bey rallied his forces with an impassioned speech warning against the terrible consequences they would all face if 'Ali Bey successfully returned.⁹¹

Lusignan's relation of this speech has a ring of authenticity about it. In general, Muhammad Bey warned that the country would fall into the hands of the infidel, who would destroy their religion if 'Ali Bey regained the mashyakhah. 'Ali Bey had surrounded himself with Christian advisors such as the Copt Rizq and the Venetian Rosetti and had sought military aid from Christian states (France, Venice, and Malta) that were the enemies of the Ottoman Empire. But his most heinous crime was his revolt against the sultan and his alliance with the Russian Czarina and their mutual efforts to destroy the empire. The speech is also of interest because it reveals that eighteenth-century Muslim Middle Eastern rulers were fully aware of the pattern of European imperialism. In criticizing the preferential treatment 'Ali Bey gave to the European merchants, whom he permitted in his realm in increasing numbers, Muhammad Bey reminded the Egyptians of the fate of the Muslims of India, who had welcomed the Christians into their midst as traders only to succumb to their military superiority. This speech also demonstrates the nastier side of politics, for Muhammad Bey later embraced most of 'Ali Bey's policies that he was now criticizing as damnable. He appointed Christian advisors of his own, hired European officers to train an artillery corps, and went out of his way to encourage English and French merchants to establish new trade routes through his domains.

Muhammad Bey's speech had its desired effect, for the troops answered his call to defend the faith and Muslim traditions. The resistance to 'Ali Bey's return took on the character of war for the faith as Muhammad Bey strengthened his position by securing a *fatwa* against the returning rebel.⁹² 'Ali Bey's approach had certainly stirred up Muslim passions in Egypt. D'Amirat noted that anti-Chris-

Cairo curiously remarks that "Mehmet Beg is diffident of every one about him. He is disposed to raise an army and to command it in person against 'Ali Bey; but he foresees he will have few in his favor." This report, found in PRO, SP 97 (Turkey), Box 49 (1773), 48, Cairo, March 2, 1773, predicted that Muhammad Bey would flee if the people did not rally to him.

91. Lusignan (146-147) reports the speech which he heard related by friends. D'Amirat also mentions that Muhammad Bey warned of the growing influence of Christians if 'Ali Bey made a successful return. See AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), May 5, 1773.

92. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 26, 1773.

tian feeling was widespread at the time⁹³ and the Englishman, Bruce, who had had an audience with Muhammad Bey just before the approaching battle, hastened to leave for England. He remarks the anti-Christian feelings aroused at that time, noting that 'Ali Bey's Russian alliance in particular had upset the Egyptian lower classes.⁹⁴

Having been apprised of his master's progress toward Cairo, Muhammad Bey led his forces in person to al-'Adliyah, there to await the further advance of the enemy. When 'Ali Bey arrived at al-Salhiyah on April 28, 1773, Muhammad Bey moved his forces there. The battle that would determine not only the leadership of Egypt, but the course of subsequent events in Palestine, Syria, and the Ottoman Empire, finally opened May 1.⁹⁵ Despite some initial successes, 'Ali's numerically inferior force was quickly overwhelmed, the easier after the Maghribi infantry deserted at a crucial moment. Whether they fled from a desire for self-preservation or as the result of a well-placed bribe cannot be determined, but once they broke their lines the situation of the defenders was hopeless. Several key commanders, including the faithful 'Ali Bey Tantawi and Shaykh Salibi were slain. The others, including Shaykh Karim and Lusignan himself fled, but 'Ali Bey, exhausted and disillusioned, refused to leave his tent.⁹⁶

When a contingent from Muhammad Bey's household entered his tent to take him prisoner 'Ali Bey, already wounded, refused to submit and is said to have killed the first two soldiers to approach him. He was then set upon and gravely wounded. When 'Ali Bey was carried into his magnificently caparisoned tent Muhammad Bey first did not recognize him, but then rose to greet him, kissed his hand, and placed him in his own seat.⁹⁷ Lusignan, who certainly cannot be accused of any favoritism toward Muhammad Bey, claims the mamluk cried upon seeing his master in this condition and severely chided his *kathhuda* for injuring his master and for disobeying the explicit orders to capture

93. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 26, 1773; B1, 111 (Alexandrie), April 13, 1773; an Alexandria report of May 7, 1773, says the French establishment was attacked in that city.

94. Bruce, IV, 648.

95. Jabarti, I, 376; AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), May 1, 1773.

96. Lusignan, 149-150; Murādī, *Silk al-Durar*, I, 57; Jabarti, I, 376.

97. Jabarti, I, 376 and 382; Lusignan, 152-153; D'Amirat also mentions in his report of this incident that Muhammad Bey rose from his seat, took 'Ali Bey's hand, and made him sit in his place and that the others present showed him great respect (AN, B1, 335 [Le Caire], May 5, 1773).

him without harming him.⁹⁸ This seems fanciful, however, as Lusignan had fled before the event.

'Ali Bey was transported to Cairo and lodged in his own house in Azbakiyah, where doctors treated his wounds, but could not save him. He died of the wounds suffered at al-Salihiyah one week after the battle, on May 8, 1773. Although some sources have argued that his death occurred in suspicious circumstances, suggesting that he may have been poisoned, there can be no doubt that he indeed died of his wounds.⁹⁹

According to Lusignan and Digeon, the sultan demanded 'Ali Bey's severed head, but Muhammad Bey refused to mutilate the body of his deceased master.¹⁰⁰ Instead, he showed the body every respect, gave 'Ali Bey a large public funeral, and buried him in the Qarafah, the traditional burial spot of the mamluk amirs, in the vicinity of the mosque of al-Shafi'i and next to the grave of his master Ibrahim Katkhuda.¹⁰¹

98. Lusignan, 152-153.

99. Jabarti (I, 377) first remarks that he died of his wounds, but then he mentions the rumor that he had been poisoned. Not wishing to place himself in a position of judgment, Jabarti concluded, "God knows if his death was natural" (I, 382). Volney (I, 137) also suggests that the circumstances surrounding his death make it impossible to say with absolute certainty that he died of his wounds only. Yet Lusignan (153) makes no attempt to brand Muhammad Bey a murderer as well as a traitor. He does not even raise the issue of poison, asserting simply that 'Ali Bey died of his wounds. The French consul d'Amirat, in his dispatch of June 26, 1773, asserted unequivocally that 'Ali Bey died of his wounds, despite the rumor people were passing of his being poisoned (AN, B1, 335 [Le Caire], June 26, 1773). In the same report d'Amirat mentions a final bit of irony regarding 'Ali Bey's relations with the Russians. Several of their ships had appeared between Alexandria and Rosetta, probably an effort to give him support during the invasion, but were late and did nothing more than tip over some small ships. They departed without provoking any further hostilities, but their brief appearance stirred up the Muslim masses against the Europeans in Alexandria.

100. Lusignan, 154; Ettore Rossi, "Storia de 'Ali Bey d'Egitto (1763-1773) in un manoscritto di J. M. Digeon," *Oriente Moderno*, 23 (1943), 57.

101. Jabarti, I, 382.

Transformation of the Qazdughli Bayt into an Autonomous Regime

The evolution of Qazdughli domestic policy followed a natural progression, proceeding from the successful struggle with its mamluk, Ottoman, and bedouin rivals to placing its personnel into all levels of the administration. These objectives, at least in theory, can be said to have been those of previous mamluk buyut, so the uniqueness of 'Ali Bey lies not in the formulation of any significant new goals, but in his ability to find the means to finally achieve the goals that had eluded his predecessors. Having achieved those preliminary goals, 'Ali Bey was then in a position to develop and attain a secondary, and broader, range of objectives. The main achievements of Qazdughli domestic policy under 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey appear to be, then, the consolidation of the power of a single bayt through the successful elimination of its many rivals, the acquisition of unchallenged control of the administration and the revenue-producing system, and the generation of vastly increased sums through the manipulation of the bureaucratic structure and the imposition of unprecedented extortions upon the various minority and merchant communities of Egypt.

Mamluks traditionally played important military and administrative roles in the Ottoman regime in Egypt, such as the important military assignment of commander of the annual pilgrimage to the holy land, governors of the districts into which the vilayet was divided, and significant administrative positions at all levels of the Ottoman administration, including the offices of defterdar and qa'immaqam on the Grand Divan itself. It is not apparent, however, that mamluks had been able to abuse the powers of these posts beyond the normal limits tolerated by the Ottoman government, for the presence of a governor with troops at his disposal, however reduced in actual power he might have been, and the division of the Ottoman military units and

mamluk houses into mutually hostile political groupings acted as checks to the greater ambitions of individual mamluk leaders who were appointed to positions within the Ottoman administration or who fought their way to the leadership of the beylicate. But 'Ali Bey overcame these traditional checks to the expansion of mamluk power and quickly absorbed the Ottoman administration into his own bayt.

We have seen how 'Ali Bey purged the ojaqs of his rivals and transformed these corps into mamluk auxiliaries. He also appointed his own mamluks or kushdashiyah to all the important military and administrative positions, such as amir al-hajj or defterdar, usually reserved for mamluks. 'Ali Bey's most innovative maneuver, however, was to develop the inherent potential of the office of qa'immaqam, an office he assumed in 1768 during his drive for absolute power. Although this office had been entrusted on previous occasions to mamluk beys, none were free of Ottoman or mamluk constraints to use its considerable authority for personal advantage. When the province was without a governor, as Egypt was for most of the period 1769-1772, owing to 'Ali Bey's refusal to tolerate the presence of this representative of the sultan in his domain, 'Ali Bey, as qa'immaqam, assumed all the executive authority of the absent governor and assumed direction of the Ottoman administration in Egypt. 'Ali Bey was therefore the first mamluk to combine the military leadership of a united beylicate with the full executive authority of an Ottoman governor. This authority he used to legitimize the elimination of his rivals and to redirect the revenues of the Ottoman administration to the members of his own bayt. So dramatic was the emergence of 'Ali Bey's bayt and so successful were his policies that within the brief span of only a few years he had completely eliminated Ottoman military power from Egypt and gained almost complete ascendancy over the administration and revenues of the vilayet.

Muhammad Bey's expulsion of 'Ali Bey from Egypt was followed by the resumption of the irsaliyah payments and the reception of a new Ottoman governor in Cairo. These acts were seen by contemporaries and by many subsequent historians as signaling the end of 'Ali Bey's revolt and the revival of Ottoman authority in Egypt, but these conclusions were premature, for Muhammad Bey's regime was as solidly entrenched, militarily and administratively, as 'Ali Bey's had been and remained equally immune to Ottoman interference in its affairs. For the most part Muhammad Bey continued the same domestic and foreign policies elaborated by 'Ali Bey, but he chose to achieve them

through different means. Rather than continue the rebellion begun by 'Ali Bey, he sought cooperation with the Ottoman government as a means of furthering his own ends. An examination of the hold that 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had acquired over the Ottoman regime in Egypt will help to explain their ability to generate the vastly increased sums upon which their foreign policies were dependent. An analysis of the regime of Muhammad Bey demonstrates how little his recognition of Ottoman sovereignty affected his ability to continue the policies first initiated by 'Ali Bey.

With 'Ali Bey's flight from Cairo in April, 1772, Muhammad Bey assumed the functions, if not the official title, of a new shaykh al-balad. It is possible that the Ottoman government procrastinated more than a year in granting Muhammad Bey official recognition of his new status in an effort to exercise some influence over the victorious mamluk, for available evidence suggests that he was not formally recognized as shaykh al-balad until after 'Ali Bey's death in May, 1773. From Istanbul the French ambassador reported in June, 1772, that Muhammad Bey had been named "commander of Cairo," a translation that could roughly fit the Arabic shaykh al-balad, qa'immaqam, or even za'im Misr, but d'Amirat, the French consul in Cairo, remarked in August of that year that the Ottoman government had designated him qa'immaqam.¹ It is possible that he was named shaykh al-balad and qa'immaqam in 1772, but the evidence is not clear. Two firmans in Turkish, both bearing the same date and having, with very few exceptions, the exact wording, appear at present to be the first evidence of Muhammad Bey's official elevation to the mashyakhah. These firmans, dated September 18, 1773 (1 Rajab, 1187), announce the death of the former shaykh al-balad 'Ali Bey, designate government officials such as the new governor Khalil Pasha, and bestow upon Muhammad Bey the title shaykh al-balad.²

Upon driving 'Ali Bey from Egypt Muhammad Bey immediately set about securing the foundations of his own bayt. He had inherited from his master a stable mamluk regime, a submissive Ottoman administration, and a subdued province. The new leader was therefore able to send his own mamluks or kushdashiyah as governors to even the most distant districts as tax collectors, something that

1. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 157 (1772), Priest, June 3, 1772. AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), August 3, 1772.

2. SCA, al-Diwan al-'Ali, 2, 206, 257; *ibid.*, 185. The bodies of the firmans are the same, but the second lists slightly more property of the deceased 'Ali Bey.

regimes in Cairo were for the most part unable to do in the eighteenth century because of the considerable military power of bedouin clans in both Upper and Lower Egypt. With the dissident mamluk and bedouin forces now held in check by the superior power of the Qazdughli regime in Cairo, Egypt experienced a period of brief respite from the incessant conflicts and wars that had characterized 'Ali Bey's turbulent mashyakhah. A general feeling of good times permeated the now peaceful vilayet as an uninterrupted flow of foodstuffs, trade, and taxes from Upper Egypt reached the capital with the same facility and regularity as those arriving from the secure districts of the delta. Using the customary parlance of that period to describe the general tranquillity that settled over the vilayet, it was said that caravans could travel in complete security throughout Egypt during the day or night.³ Egyptian affairs remained so peaceful during the three years of Muhammad Bey's mashyakhah that the contemporary historian al-Jabarti could not find conflicts or troubles sufficient enough to mention for those years. As a result, one must turn to other sources to follow the domestic course of Muhammad Bey's regime.

Although he was free to chart new courses, Muhammad Bey's foreign and domestic policies were only slightly different from those of his predecessor, being characterized more by a change in method and style than a shift in overall objectives. The easy substitution of one regime by another without the usual protracted struggle indicates the extent to which Muhammad Bey's faction had gradually insinuated itself into positions of authority prior to 'Ali Bey's flight from Egypt. This transfer of power is more characteristic of a coup d'état than a revolution, for 'Ali's faction was reorganized rather than replaced. This slightly reorganized bayt, called by Arab historians the *bayt muhammadi* (Muhammad's house, or faction), dominated Egypt with only two interruptions until the end of the eighteenth century, when the traditional mamluk world was shattered forever by the invasion of the French under Napoleon Bonaparte.

'Ali Bey had been careless in permitting Muhammad Bey to build up a powerful faction loyal to himself within his own bayt. Even before the Syrian campaign of 1771 several of Muhammad Bey's own mam-luks, particularly Ibrahim and Murad, had been elevated to high places in 'Ali Bey's regime. Muhammad Bey had been permitted to buy many mam-luks of his own and, enjoying the absolute confidence of his

3. Jabarti, I, 418.

master, had been allowed to advance them to important positions within his master's regime. 'Ali Bey therefore was accepting into the core of his regime mamluks whose first loyalty was to his leading general, not to himself. Muhammad Bey also had personal qualities that attracted the loyalty and admiration of his kushdashiyah and others within 'Ali Bey's bayt. Jabarti remarks that the young mamluk's affable character, his flamboyant style, and generous bakhshish won him widespread popular support among important elements of mamluk and native society.⁴ The ulama, legitimizers of political power and molders of public opinion, were especially sympathetic to Muhammad Bey for the financial support he gave to them and their institutions and looked to him as spokesman for a pro-Muslim policy as Christian influence grew in 'Ali Bey's regime. Fellow mamluks such as Isma'il Bey also respected his military and organizational skills and supported his adherence to Muslim principles and policies. When, therefore, Muhammad Bey entered Cairo on the heels of 'Ali Bey's flight, he quickly established an orderly government. It was reported that the city did not experience rioting, only five or six houses of some of 'Ali Bey's faction being despoiled, and that "Perfect tranquility reigned, as if no revolution had occurred."⁵

Muhammad Bey's new bayt was consolidated around his own mamluks and kushdashiyah, but it came to include a significant number of former officers exiled by 'Ali Bey to the Sa'id and many members of 'Ali Bey's fractured house who transferred their loyalty to the younger shaykh al-balad. Muhammad Bey's return to Cairo had been facilitated by the exiles he had found in the Sa'id, defeated bedouins, the remnants of houses 'Ali Bey had previously crushed, and Ottoman officers exiled there by 'Ali Bey. Perhaps the most important of these exiles who descended the Nile with Muhammad Bey was 'Abd al-Rahman, the former agha of the Mustahfizan whom 'Ali Bey had exiled several years earlier, for he now rallied the Ottoman units to Muhammad Bey's cause.⁶ Numerous mamluks at all levels of 'Ali Bey's bayt saw it was better to attach themselves to the new mamluk chief than to share their leader's disgrace. It should be noted, however, that they were mostly his followers and a few kushdashiyah, such as Isma'il Bey, and not his personal mamluks. These latter remained loyal to their master and followed him into Palestinian exile, either dying as martyrs

4. *Ibid.*, 417.

5. PRO, SP 97, Box 48 (1772), 98, July 3, 1772.

6. *Ibid.*; Jabarti, II, 36.

to his lost cause or spending the rest of their lives in exile. As mentioned, this group was estimated to include eight or nine beys and 800-1,500 troops.⁷ It was not until his rival's death, however, that Muhammad Bey incorporated the largest number of previously exiled mamluks into his now consolidated bayt.⁸

Muhammad Bey's own mamluks and followers were already in high positions when the armed conflict with 'Ali Bey erupted in 1772. After his seizure of power he also replaced those beys who were either killed or fled with members of his own retinue. Although he governed only three years, he was able to elevate a remarkable number of his own mamluks to the beylicate, which remained the base of his military strength. His personal slaves occupied nine of the twenty-four positions on the mamluk divan and he had the cooperation of other beys, such as Isma'il, who remained loyal followers. Besides Ibrahim and Murad, the following mamluks of Muhammad Bey held the rank of bey when he died in 1775: Yusuf Bey, Ahmad Bey al-Kilarji, Mustafa Bey al-Kabir, Ayyub Bey al-Kabir, Dhu al-Faqar Bey, Muhammad Bey Tubbal, and Ridwan Bey. Though he was a follower, not a personal mamluk, Hasan Bey Suq al-Silah was also raised to the beylicate by Muhammad Bey.⁹ Another nine of Muhammad Bey's mamluks were elevated to the rank of bey in the years after his death. They were Ayyub Bey al-Defterdar, Sulayman Bey al-Agha, Ibrahim Bey al-Wali (al-Saghir), Ayyub Bey al-Saghir, Qasim Bey, 'Uthman Bey al-Sharqawi, Murad Bey al-Saghir, Salim Bey Abu Diyab, and Lashin Bey.¹⁰ Jabarti makes it clear, however, that Ibrahim and Murad were the most influential of the beys while Muhammad Bey was shaykh al-balad.¹¹

7. Jabarti, II, 36; AN, B1, 442 (Constantinople), May 10, 1772, cites 1,500 men and 8 beys. B1, 1035 (Seyde), May 11, 1772, mentions 9 beys with 800-900 men. Lusignan (118) specifically names beys who fled with him, including the agha and kakhuda of the Mustahfizan, both mamluks he had raised to the beylicate.

8. Jabarti, I, 418.

9. Hasan Bey Suq al-Silah was the mamluk of the female slave of Shaykh Abu al-Mawahib al-Bakri. He was in the service of the shaykh until he died, when he joined 'Ali Bey. He was one of the kashifs in Upper Egypt who rallied to Muhammad Bey when the latter took refuge there from his master in 1772. He was included in the new bayt and was raised to the beylicate by Muhammad Bey. See Jabarti, II, 58, for information on Hasan Bey.

10. These two lists were compiled by Jabarti, I, 414. Jabarti is not always careful in distinguishing between mamluks and atba'. He does not include in this list Salih Bey, who became amir al-hajj in 1213 (1798) although he calls him a former mamluk of Muhammad Bey (III, 66).

11. Ibid., 167.

Muhammad Bey also gained complete military control of the ojaqs, but whereas he was quick to complete his domination of the various mamluk factions, he did not crush the potential ojaq opposition until 'Ali Bey was defeated in 1773. When 'Ali Bey returned from Syria to renew the struggle with his mamluk it was reported that the Ottoman corps wavered in their loyalty to Muhammad Bey and first resisted his call to arms. After the battle of al-Salihyah, therefore, Muhammad Bey chased the ojaq leaders from Cairo and named his own mamluks and trusted followers as senior officers of the corps. Only after securing control of the ojaqs did Muhammad Bey welcome back to Cairo the majority of mamluks and ojaq troops previously exiled.

'Ali Bey had first acquired control of the Ottoman military corps in Egypt by purging them of his enemies and substituting his own mamluks as officers of these units. Following the same policy, Muhammad Bey now completed the transformation of the Ottoman ojaqs into mamluk auxiliaries by naming his own mamluks to the officer ranks of the various corps and giving them control of revenues usually attached to the leadership of those corps. The most lucrative tax farms formerly controlled by the ojaq officers he took for himself, however. This dual political-economic attack upon the once formidable power of the regiments carried out by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey changed the very character of the Ottoman corps in Egypt and eliminated them as instruments of Ottoman power. With their leaders exiled or murdered, the members of the various units either fled Egypt or melted into the local population, taking up trades or commerce to support themselves when their stipends were withheld by the shaykh al-balad or his mamluk officers.

The following members of Muhammad Bey's bayt are known to have held positions in the ojaq units or to have acquired iltizams previously enjoyed by ojaq officers. Examination of the ojaq rolls would reveal many others. 'Ali Agha, who had rallied to Muhammad Bey when the civil war had destroyed the harmony of 'Ali Bey's bayt, had been offered the choice of being elevated to the beylicate or appointed katkhuda of the Çavuşan. He had chosen the latter.¹² Sulayman Agha, whom Muhammad Bey had raised to the rank of bey, was agha of the Mustahfizan corps.¹³ The Amir Ahmad Çavuş al-Kabir had been Baş Çavuş of the Mustahfizan.¹⁴ The Amir Qasim, another

12. Ibid., 64.

13. Ibid., 173. He appears to be the brother of Ibrahim Bey al-Saghir (ibid., 63). Sulayman later became a bey (ibid., 173).

14. Ibid., II, 2.

mamluk Muhammad Bey raised to the beylicate, was *katkhuda* of the 'Azaban.¹⁵ One also finds a reference to 'Uthman Manaw, *katkhuda* of the Mustahfizan.¹⁶ It is clear, then, that Muhammad Bey had direct control of the various Ottoman military corps through his personal mamluks and followers.

The power of the new regime put together by Muhammad Bey was considerably increased by the positions his amirs and mamluks assumed in the Ottoman administration. By the time he undertook his Syrian campaign in 1775 his regime had entirely absorbed the Ottoman government in Egypt and had achieved *de facto* if not *de jure* autonomy. Unlike the autonomy proclaimed by 'Ali Bey, that of Muhammad Bey was tempered with frequent proclamations and acts of loyalty to the sultan, such as the sending of the annual *irsaliyah* revenues to Istanbul. While the payment of this annual sum and the formal recognition of the sultan's authority might not, on the surface, give a clear indication of Muhammad Bey's freedom from Istanbul, a consideration of the positions and functions he controlled within the Ottoman administration makes the fact of his autonomy certain.

Muhammad Bey, like his illustrious predecessor, held nothing more than the official rank of *sanjaq bey*, or *amir al-liwa*, in the Ottoman system until he assumed, like his master, the position of *qa'immaqam*. It was the highest Ottoman position either was to enjoy, but it gave them considerable executive authority in the absence of an Ottoman governor. But the beylicate, not the Ottoman system, remained the source of *Qazdughli* power, so it should not be surprising that Muhammad Bey made his own favorite mamluk, Ibrahim Bey, the *qa'immaqam* once he himself was officially recognized as *shaykh al-balad*. With the exception of the positions of governor and chief judge all the important places in the Ottoman administration were allotted to his faithful amirs. His *waqfiyah* (deed) of 1774 identifies Isma'il Bey as the *amir al-hajj* that year, but it was Ibrahim Bey who appears to have been the major domo of his regime. Ibrahim, who had been *amir al-hajj* in 1772, held the two most important posts after the now officially recognized *shaykh al-balad* himself, for he was both *defterdar*, or chief treasurer, of the Imperial Ottoman Treasury in Egypt, and *qa'immaqam*. Murad Bey and Yusuf Bey are not given any titles in the *waqfiyah* other than

15. *Ibid.*, 21. A court document also certifies that Qasim, *katkhuda* of the 'Azaban, was *amin al-bahrayn*, or *multazim* of the two quays at Bulaq and Old Cairo (SCA, *al-Bab al-'Ali*, 283, 2, 2).

16. SCA, *Dasht*, 291, 144.

amir al-liwa, but both were powerful beys in the bayt muhammadi and are presumed to have controlled substantial revenues. Even the interpreter of the Grand Divan, the Amir Muhammad Agha, was one of Muhammad Bey's mamluks, so it was virtually impossible for the governor to conduct business detrimental to the interests of the shaykh al-balad and his bayt.¹⁷

'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey burrowed even deeper into the Ottoman administration to control the flow of revenues through their province. Muhammad Agha Abaza, a mamluk who was Muhammad Bey's personal katkhuda, was *mutahaddith* (spokesman, supervisor) of the *bayt al-mal khassah*,¹⁸ and 'Uthman Agha, a follower, was *mutahaddith* for the *bayt al-mal 'ammah*.¹⁹ Another of Muhammad Bey's followers was the *kizlar agha* (supervisor of the women of the harim and of revenues set aside for them) of the Grand Divan.²⁰ 'Ali Khazandar, a follower, had been commander of Cairo (za'im Misr).²¹ This control of the ojaqs and of the activities of the Grand Divan made it virtually impossible for the Ottoman government to conspire against the shaykh al-balad as it had done the previous decade by sending a governor with secret instructions to use ojaq troops in a surprise attack against the incumbent mamluk leader. 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had successfully transformed the political situation in Egypt, making themselves impregnable to attack from within their own province.

It may be said that Muhammad Bey did not enjoy the same authority that 'Ali Bey had acquired because the former had permitted an Ottoman governor to resume his customary residence in the Cairo citadel. But these governors whom Muhammad Bey received were mere ambassadors of the Ottoman government at his court and held no real authority of their own. They had no means to interfere in mamluk

17. SCA, al-Diwan, al-'Ali, 1, 219, 17.

18. SCA, al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 189, 26, 19. Shaw (*Organization*, 172) notes that the *bayt al-mal khassah* was an iltizam established to care for the property of those of the deceased who were Ottoman aghas or officials possessing property in Egypt who died while in debt to the Imperial Treasury, whether in Egypt or elsewhere. After 1659-60 the military corps seized for themselves the proceeds of the properties left by their deceased members, and only that of civilians and the *bayt al-mal khassah* were left for the treasury.

19. SCA, al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 189, 26, 19. Shaw (*Organization*, 172) writes that the *bayt al-mal 'ammah* was an iltizam responsible for the revenues from the property of those not in the service of the Ottoman government who died without heirs and were not in debt to the Imperial Treasury. It, too, was controlled by a mamluk officer in the eighteenth century.

20. SCA, al-Diwan al-'Ali, 2, 224, 170; SCA, Dasht, 294, 180.

21. SCA, Dasht, 291, 28.

affairs nor did they any longer speak to a local constituency. In summarizing the events of the hijrah year 1188, which began in March, 1774, Jabarti remarked:

The first day of this year found Khalil Pasha governor of Egypt. But Khalil Pasha had nothing of the functions but the title, for the entire administration of the country was in the hands of the illustrious amir Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab. The amirs and the high functionaries were all his mamluks or freed slaves. Affairs didn't go too badly; they were even in a satisfactory state. A general calm quieted spirits agitated by the preceding events. Goods were sold at a good price; the inhabitants of Egypt were no longer completely downtrodden and immobilized and a quiet dignity was evident among them from time to time. [But] in sum, it was a deceitful calm, because behind the calm the observer could see the storm. ²²

Boyer, the French vice-consul in Alexandria, had even reported that firmans were issued in the name of Muhammad Bey, not the governor's, while the French in Istanbul felt that the governor simply signed whatever Muhammad Bey placed before him. ²³

Muhammad Bey solidified his control of the Ottoman administration in Egypt and its revenues to an even greater degree when, in June, 1774 (Rabi' al-Thani, 1188), he secured an imperial firman that appointed Mustafa Tuqan al-Nabulsi the new governor and transferred Khalil Pasha to Jidda. ²⁴ Mustafa Tuqan, who owed his appointment to the influence of Muhammad Bey in Istanbul, appears to have acted entirely in the interests of the shaykh al-balad. Since the new governor was Muhammad Bey's chosen man it is not surprising to find numerous documents in the court records, issued in the name of Mustafa Pasha, that permitted Muhammad Bey to take possession of the property of his rivals or to divert revenues of the Imperial Treasury to his own purpose. Finally, on the eve of his unexpected death, Muhammad Bey had set aside his protege and had been issued a series of firmans naming him governor of Egypt and, probably, of southern Syria. More is said about these events in the next chapter.

Muhammad Bey's bayt was held together by common interest and the firm bonds of loyalty and trust created by the master-slave relationship. But these considerable bonds were supplemented in

22. Jabarti, I, 385.

23. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), August 5, 1773; AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, March 4, 1775.

24. Jabarti, I, 418. Amnon Cohen (*Palestine in the 18th Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* [Jerusalem: 1973], 56, n. 97) notes that this was Mustafa Tuqan, not al-'Azm as erroneously reported by Jabarti. He had been governor of Nablus in 1771.

another way that has generally been overlooked. The choice of wife, or wives, appears from waqf documents to have been a matter of concern for the higher mamluks. Although marriages in the mamluk state could not match the dynastic marriages of Europe in significance, they nevertheless, for their own time and society, served similar functions.

Brides in the mamluk state were different from their European counterparts on two important counts. They brought no significant dowry, such as a throne or province, to their marriages, and did not represent royal blood whose offspring would inherit the combined territories of mother and father. Their offspring, being freeborn Muslims, were prevented by law and custom from entering the mamluk system, hence, in theory, they could never aspire to high positions in the mamluk state. There are examples of the children of mamluks entering the system, but they are exceptions, not the rule. Mamluk brides were themselves mostly slaves or sisters of slaves, although they were sometimes daughters or widows of mamluks, and were usually from the same provinces as their husbands.²⁵ Yet they might bring small assets to their husbands that amounted, for their society, to a large dowry, and they did represent, albeit in a distinct manner, a type of aristocracy in the mamluk system. A well-regarded bride could advance the career of an ambitious mamluk, especially if she were related to the shaykh al-balad or someone at the head of his own bayt. Certainly the slaves or sisters of mighty mamluk amirs could not be expected to be given in marriage to anyone but a mamluk of an equally high rank, or one whose future promised success and good fortune. It was a special mark of favor, therefore, for a mamluk to be permitted to marry a sister or daughter of his master or a well-known woman from the harim of his master or another powerful mamluk amir.

The brides of great amirs were usually, like them, freed slaves, sisters or daughters of mamluk amirs, or sometimes the widows of fallen mamluks. Seldom did they marry outside their "class." Their

²⁵ Lesser mamluks sometimes married into the native ulama or merchant ranks, but it appears that important mamluks married only their own kind. Even in the 1850s this small group represented a social aristocracy in Egypt, for the explorer Richard Burton noted that people were impressed by one's mamluk origins. See Sir R. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Mecca* (repr., New York: 1964), I, 61, n. 1. The remnants of the Turko-Circassian families still form a social elite in republican Egypt. It is still a compliment to explain that a woman's beauty is the result of her Circassian origins or to say that a woman has the beauty of a Circassian.

patrimony could not match that of a European princess or queen, and they sometimes brought only their good name and "family" lineage into marriage. But on occasion widows brought substantial wealth to their new husbands, for they were the inheritors of at least part of their deceased husband's estate and often were the beneficiaries and/or supervisors of awqaf established for them. Many a shaykh, for instance, advanced his social position by marrying the daughter or widow of a rich merchant. Mamluk marriages, too, were a means of social advancement. Murad Bey, for instance, not only enhanced his reputation with the marriage to 'Ali Bey's widow Nafisah, but also acquired through her possession of 'Ali Bey's residence in Azbakiyah and revenues from his awqaf. Even through the reign of the Khedive Isma'il in the nineteenth century it was common practice for the princes and princesses of the ruling house to give their freed slaves in marriage and to grant them at that time a parcel of 100-1,000 feddans (a feddan is approximately 1 acre) constituted in waqf. These freed slaves, by possessing so significant a landholding, instantaneously became part of the landed aristocracy.²⁶

A mamluk marriage was usually a sign of favor by a master for his manumitted slave. A master had to give his permission before his mamluk could marry, so it was not unusual for a master to take the initiative in finding a suitable spouse for a favored mamluk. The master would usually arrange the marriage for his mamluk, giving him either a freed slave from his own harim or offering his own daughter or sister. Such marriages not only were an especial reward for past service and a sign of favor, but served a legitimizing function in a mamluk's rise toward the top of the mamluk hierarchy. There appear, therefore, various ranks in mamluk marriages. Most unions simply brought together two freed slaves in a simple ceremony and had little meaning for the course of mamluk politics, but marriages of powerful amirs were definitely marriages of state. When 'Ali Bey became shaykh al-balad he permitted his kushdash Isma'il Bey to marry the

26. The waqf records of the former royal family kept by the Ministry of Awqaf in Cairo are full of such land grants, usually in the form of a waqf for the benefit of freed slaves of the princes and princesses of Muhammad 'Ali's ruling house. It was apparently a common custom, for Ayalon ("Studies in al-Jabarti," 289) writes, "Most important is al-Jabarti's testimony about Muhammad Bak al-Alfi who bought numerous mamluks and slave-girls until the number of his purchased mamluks rose to about one thousand. Every short period he used to marry whoever he chose from his mamluks to a slave girl which would suit him and he would also amply provide the married couples for their matrimonial life."

daughter of their deceased master Ibrahim Katkhuda. That ceremony had been accompanied by a month of public celebrations. But mamluk marriages also served the function of consolidating even further the already close ties between master and slave in a mamluk bayt. Consider the alliances formed by the following marriages.

According to the document that established his waqf in favor of the mosque of Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi in Tanta, 'Ali Bey had four wives, al-Sitt 'Aisha Qadin bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda, freed by the deceased Amir Ibrahim Katkhuda (so 'Ali Bey's first wife was also the slave of his master); al-Sitt Nafisah Khatun bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda; al-Sitt Munawwar Khatun bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda; and al-Sitt Gulsan bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda. According to this waqfiyah all four had given birth (*mustawlad*) to his children.²⁷ 'Aisha Qadin appears to be senior in rank to the others, including Nafisah, for she is always mentioned first and is consistently assigned greater revenues from the waqf.²⁸ When 'Ali was defeated Murad Bey received the beautiful and coveted second wife, Nafisah, one of the few women to play a known role in the subsequent years of the mamluk beylicate. She was a most talented and resourceful woman, able to read and write, and took an active role in politics during the French occupation from 1798 to 1801. Whatever she controlled of the property of 'Ali Bey's inheritance or other revenues, like those from his waqf, went with her in the new marriage to Murad Bey.²⁹ Murad seemed to collect rich widows, for in 1768 he had acquired Fatimah, the widow of the murdered Salih Bey al-Kabir.³⁰ It has gone unnoticed, however, that Muhammad Bey

27. This waqfiyah is preserved as Number 743 in the Daftarkhanah of the Ministry of Awqaf (hereafter MA) in Cairo. Since it was shameful for persons not to know their father or mother, that is, to be a bastard, and slaves were introduced into Islamic society without regard to their Christian origins, Islam gave these neophyte Muslims ritual fathers. Mamluks called their masters "my father," just as the master referred to his mamluks as his "sons." But slaves were also given other names by which they were known. Male slaves whose fathers were non-Muslims or unknown were called "ibn 'Abdallah," the son of 'Abdallah. Female slaves were known as "bint 'Abdallah," the daughter of 'Abdallah. Sometimes slaves would take the names of their masters, such as Muhammad Bey 'Ali or Ibrahim Bey Muhammad. Numerous examples are to be found in the records. Since Muslims usually distinguished between white and black slaves, we find in the case of white slaves the added description "al-bayda," the caucasian. Black slaves were called "al-aswad" for men and "al-sawda" for females. One can also find descriptions such as "al-samra," or brown-skinned.

28. The waqfiyah is a rolled scroll and is therefore without page numbers. The wives are stated as beneficiaries in several parts of the document.

29. Jabarti, IV, 264.

30. Ibid., III, 167. Bruce (I, 27) is surely in error when he claims that a bey's

enhanced his own position by acquiring 'Aisha Qadin, the senior widow of his former master.³¹

If one examines the marriages of Muhammad Bey's mamluks one obtains a remarkable insight into the network of human relationships that helped bind the most important elements of his bayt together. Muhammad Bey arranged the following marriages for his leading amirs, each of whom was therefore bound to his master by the delicate silk robe of the bride in addition to the usual ties that formed the master-slave relationship in mamluk society. There can be no doubt that we are dealing here with the feminine aristocracy in mamluk society. Murad may have been permitted to marry Nafisah, the widow of 'Ali Bey, but Ibrahim appears once more to be the obvious favorite of his master, for he was linked by blood, literally and figuratively, to Muhammad Bey through two important marriages. Ibrahim Bey was first married to Zulaykha Khatun, the sister of his master. She was ultimately put to rest beside her brother in a sanctuary of the mosque-school he constructed in Cairo. But Muhammad Bey also gave to his favorite Amnah Khatun bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda, whom he had freed.³² All parties to this quadrangular relationship must have been remarkably good-natured for jealously not to have caused ill will to arise from a situation where Ibrahim had as wives both the sister and freed slave of his master. Later Ibrahim Bey, known as al-Kabir (the elder), in turn gave his sister to his favorite and namesake, Ibrahim Bey al-Saghir (the younger).³³

The Amir Ayyub Bey al-Kabir Muhammad was given as wife another of Muhammad Bey's freed slaves, the clever 'Arifah Qadin bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda.³⁴ She appears many times in the court registers as supervisor or founder of awqaf. Yusuf Bey, upon being raised to the dignity of amir in 1180 (1766-67), was given another of

khazandar married the bey's wife when he died, for the khazandar would be inferior in rank to the senior beys of the deceased amir.

31. SCA, al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 200, 30, 21, refers to 'Aisha as the wife of 'Ali Bey, later the wife of the deceased Muhammad Bey, qa'immaqam Misr.

32. SCA, Dasht, 294, 199. In SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 283, 278, 197, Ibrahim Bey appears as the wakil, or agent, of his wife Amnah. It was common practice for amirs to be the agents of their wives or to look after the financial interests of their freed slaves. We find that Muhammad Bey was the agent for 'Aisha Qadin, the daughter of the deceased Mustafa Shurbaji Tufenkciyan in A.H. 1187. See SCA al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 189, 415, 365.

33. Jabarti, III, 64.

34. SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 328, 346, 132; MA, Qism al-Sijillat al-Ahliyah, Sijill 16 Ahli, p. 30; Sijill 14 Misr, No. 151.

Muhammad Bey's sisters in marriage.³⁵ Even followers might have their marriages arranged by their patrons. Sulayman Agha ibn 'Abdallah, za'im Misr, is cited as the *wakil* (agent) for his wife Salin bint 'Abdallah al-Bayda, freed by the deceased Muhammad Bey, former qa'immaqam.³⁶ 'Ali Kusah, who is identified as both a follower or freed slave of Muhammad Bey, had as wife Gulsan Khatun, the daughter of the deceased Amir Husayn Bey. She became supervisor of her husband's waqf.³⁷ Jabarti even relates an incident in which Muhammad Bey had to act as the marriage broker for his katkhuda, Isma'il Agha, the brother of 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi, who wanted to marry one of his deceased brother's widows. Isma'il Agha was rejected by the widow, who had meanwhile entered another harim, whereupon Muhammad Bey intervened in an attempt to overcome Salun's objections to being Isma'il Agha's second wife. The marriage between the widow and her previous brother-in-law was only consummated after the death of Isma'il's first wife, Fatimah, who was the daughter of Salun's former patron.³⁸

Mamluk marriages therefore should not be viewed as haphazard, for they served important functions in mamluk state and society. The exact influence a well-placed wife had over the career of an amir cannot be ascertained; it is obvious, though, that the sisters, freed slaves, and widows of the beys formed a definite feminine aristocracy within mamluk society and that their marriages with favored mamluks created a second set of entangling relationships to supplement the usual links between the master and mamluks, kushdashiyah and atba' of his bayt. It is also apparent that these state marriages served a legitimizing function in the rise of a mamluk toward the top of the mamluk structure and in the transition from one mamluk generation to the next.

Money was not just the sweet fruit of power, but also the necessary sustenance of the mamluk system, for the size and strength of a mamluk bayt were directly related to the number and income of iltizams, or *muqata'at*, over which it could gain control. Exclusion from the more important revenue-producing tax farms condemned a

35. Jabarti, II, 17.

36. SCA, Dasht, 291, 220.

37. SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 356, 407, 136. 'Ali Kusah had become a merchant (*tajir*) in the Khan al-Khalili.

38. Jabarti, II, 20. SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 283, 279, 197 (1188), refers to Isma'il Agha, katkhuda of Muhammad Bey, as the brother of the deceased 'Ali Bey al-Kabir, meaning al-Ghazzawi. He was later raised to the rank of bey by Isma'il Bey al-Kabir after the death of Muhammad Bey.

bayt to secondary status or threatened it with absorption into a more powerful bayt. While a bayt might actually attain dominance over its rivals by force of arms, both its rise to preeminence and its ability to maintain its position ultimately depended upon its control of the revenues assigned to the most important muqata'at in Egypt. These muqata'at were by tradition distributed in such a way that no single bayt could achieve total domination over its rivals or the Ottoman military units. The latter, having control of important iltizams of their own, represented the Ottoman presence in Egypt and generally preserved the balance of power among various mamluk factions.³⁹

'Ali Bey's "revolution" wrought several fundamental changes to alignments of political and economic power which had remained relatively constant in Ottoman Egypt for more than a century. Whereas a balance had been maintained among hostile Ottoman and mamluk factions, 'Ali Bey's successful elimination of his mamluk and Ottoman rivals made it exceedingly difficult for the Ottoman government to play the usual game of setting one mamluk faction against another or using the military units against an unwanted shaykh al-balad. But 'Ali Bey's assault upon rival mamluk factions and the military units was not just political. He used the new political authority he enjoyed to strip his rivals of the control over the extensive system of iltizams, both urban and agricultural, which previous to his mashyakhah had been distributed in such a way among the ojaqs, mamluks, or bedouins that no single faction could emerge supreme over its enemies.⁴⁰ But 'Ali Bey went a long way toward centralizing control of the vast iltizam system in his own bayt. Neither 'Ali Bey nor Muhammad Bey could have pursued radical new policies nor waged foreign wars without the vastly increased revenues they derived from sources traditionally beyond the control of a single faction. The mashyakhahs of 'Ali Bey (1767-1772) and Muhammad Bey (1772-1775) therefore mark the first attempt in modern Egyptian history to restructure in a fundamentally new way the traditional equilibrium that existed among socioeconomic and political-military institutions in Ottoman Egypt and to create a strong centralized regime having more or less complete control over both the political institutions and the economy of that province. The Qazdughli beylicate therefore presaged by almost half a century the

39. Raymond, *Artisans et Commerçants*, II, 656, has a table showing that Janissaries began acquiring iltizams in the seventeenth century.

40. Ibid., 688 ff., 772-775.

emergence of a similar, but more successful, regime under Muhammad 'Ali Pasha.

The chief revenue-producing areas in eighteenth-century Egypt were land and commerce, and over these two areas 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey gained virtually complete control. The absence of serious rivals afforded them the opportunity to impose whatever taxes they thought the province would bear, permitted them to direct the flow of domestic and international commerce, and gave them the opportunity to disburse revenues from the Imperial Treasury for their own purposes. The following discussion of the economic bases of the Qazdughli regime focuses on the agricultural and urban muqata'at over which 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey acquired control and on the extraordinary sources of revenue, such as extortion and private commercial ventures, that they learned to tap.

The small amount of evidence relating to the system of agricultural *iltizams* available for this study suggests that Qazdughli control over the revenues and produce of the agricultural lands was far more complete than that of any previous beylical regime. Mamluk or Ottoman rulers in Cairo seldom enjoyed such control over Upper and Lower Egypt in the eighteenth century, for Upper Egypt was the traditional refuge of dissident mamluk bands and the domain of powerful bedouin confederations. It should be remembered that the regimes of both 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had themselves gestated for a brief period in Upper Egypt before they were given birth in Cairo. But Muhammad Bey had broken the power of the bedouin chiefs of Upper Egypt for his master as early as 1769 and had gathered dissident mamluk forces and defeated bedouin bands around him as he descended the Nile in 1772 to give combat to 'Ali Bey. Later he permitted Ottomans and mamluks exiled by 'Ali Bey to return to their former positions. Upper Egypt was therefore free of military units hostile to the new regime which Muhammad Bey established in Cairo. Jabarti's remark that goods moved in safety from Upper Egypt to Cairo with the same regularity and certainty as those from Lower Egypt throughout Muhammad Bey's *mashyakhah* is only one indication that the new shaykh al-balad had firm control over all the Egyptian province.⁴¹ There is other evidence to substantiate Jabarti's remark.

There is, first of all, no reported opposition to Muhammad Bey by Ottoman, mamluk, or bedouin factions in the provinces throughout his

41. Jabarti, I, 418.

brief rule. He was therefore able to dispatch his mamluks and followers as kashifs and multazims to the most distant provinces and to enjoy the revenues or produce of those areas as few leaders in Cairo could in the eighteenth century. Iltizams previously controlled by Shaykh Humam and the Hawwara, for instance, were taken by the Qazdughli amirs after 1769. We also know that many of Muhammad Bey's mamluks were sent to govern particular provinces in his name. 'Uthman "al-Sharqawi" carried the name of the province he governed; Muhammad Bey Tubbal is known to have governed Daqhaliyah; and Ayyub Bey al-Kabir is known to have commanded the strategic province of Girga.⁴² We also learn from his waqfiyah that Muhammad Bey constituted extensive agricultural lands in the provinces of Girga and Gharbiyah as waqf, thereby indicating control of those areas. There is also a court record of April 13, 1774 (1 Safar, 1188) certifying that the Copt Mankarius had brought 30,000 riyals as taxes from the province of Qusayr along the Red Sea coast of Upper Egypt. Ibrahim al-Jawhari, Muhammad Bey's Coptic secretary, is identified by the record as the wakil of Muhammad Bey, who is himself cited as the multazim of this distant tax farm.⁴³ The French consul Mure also remarked that Muhammad Bey owned a large part of the land of Egypt, meaning, probably, that he held much of the land in iltizam.⁴⁴ It is apparent, then, that Muhammad Bey's control of the rich agricultural lands of Egypt extended to all areas and that he was able to extract revenues from Upper as well as Lower Egyptian districts.

Having control of the administration and the right to tax also permitted the Qazdughli amirs to increase the yield from the iltizams whose supervision they acquired. For instance, secondary sources have charged that Muhammad Bey doubled or tripled the tax burden on the land. Such accusations are difficult to substantiate, however, without resort to tax registers that were unavailable for this study. It is known that he substituted for a series of former taxes, which previous multazims had "tyrannically" imposed, a single new tax which he had the impertinence to call "abolition of the tyrannies" tax, or *raf' al-mazalim*.⁴⁵ The imposition of this tax and the raising of others had given rise to much European criticism of his despotism and had offered

42. Ibid., III, 172; SCA, al-Diwan al-'Ali, 2, 224, 170; SCA, Dasht, 294, p. 180; al-Diwan al-'Ali, 2, 473, 300.

43. SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 283, 440, 300.

44. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), December 11, 1774.

45. Shaw (*Organization*, 91-92) explains this new tax.

to 'Ali Bey the false hope that his return to Egypt would signal the beginning of a general revolt against his oppression. Along with the traditional agricultural taxes, however, the *raf' al-mazalim* was paid throughout the reigns of Muhammad Bey's successors and into the reign of Muhammad 'Ali, when it was replaced by other equally obnoxious taxes.

The *raf' al-mazalim* was only one of a series of taxes with which the peasants were oppressed. Other taxes, such as *al-kushufiyah*, *al-barrani*, and *al-mudaf*, were assigned for the multazim's use by tradition and often amounted to two or three times more than the *miri*, or tax paid to the Ottoman government.⁴⁶ Pressures upon the peasantry from constant increases in the tax burden were building throughout the eighteenth century, but they surged noticeably during the second half of the century when a succession of Qazdughli amirs imposed extraordinary burdens upon the peasants. In his study of the Egyptian countryside in the eighteenth century 'Abd al-Rahim noted that the tax registers record only the mounting sums of official taxes paid by the villages of Egypt to the government in Cairo and do not contain the extraordinary amounts levied with increasing regularity by the Qazdughli leaders.⁴⁷ Much of the Qazdughli need for increased agricultural revenues was, of course, related to the enormous costs of the foreign wars undertaken by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey. In 1774, for instance, Muhammad Bey levied an extra 300 pataques on every village in Egypt to help pay for his proposed second Syrian campaign.⁴⁸ These extralegal exactions were a significant source of income for 'Ali Bey and his Qazdughli successors. Their frequent imposition by Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey in the last quarter of the century helped to destroy the equilibrium of peasant life and pushed the ultizam system toward chaos. 'Abd al-Rahim found that as the result of the continued demands of the central government for more

46. 'Abd al-Rahim 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd al-Rahim, "Financial Burdens on the Peasants under the Aegis of the Iltizam System in Egypt," paper delivered to the Conference on the Economic and Demographic History of the Middle East, Princeton University, June, 1974. See 'Abd al-Rahim, *al-Rif' al-Misri fi al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashar* (Cairo: 1974), 100-119, and Shaw, *French Revolution*, 108-110, 123, 145, for explanations of these taxes. Ramadan ('Ali Bey al-Kabir, 79) notes that the *mudaf* in some iltizams had risen from 50 to 100 percent of the original price of the iltizam by the time of 'Ali Bey.

47. 'Abd al-Rahim, *al-Rif' al-Misri*, 116-117.

48. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 20, 1774. Without citing his sources, Ramadan (215) claims the Hijaz campaign cost 'Ali Bey 520,000 purses and notes that the Syrian war was even costlier.

taxes (and the confusion of the French invasion) many villages throughout Egypt were abandoned and in ruin in the first years of the nineteenth century. Some districts such as Manufiyah were reduced to only twenty-five villages, and the multazims, unable to meet their obligations to the government, were themselves pushed into bankruptcy.⁴⁹ Qazdughli tyranny had contributed, therefore, to the ruination of the agricultural economy in Egypt.

Although the profits from agricultural iltizams could be substantial and have usually been thought to be the financial base of the mamluk-Ottoman regimes in Egypt, Raymond suggests that the revenues of the urban iltizams have been underestimated as a source of financial strength to these regimes.⁵⁰ He demonstrates, for instance, that the Ottoman military units had acquired control of most of the important urban iltizams in the course of the seventeenth century. Mamluk beys had begun seizing control of some of these urban tax farms around 1750, but the political attacks made by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey upon the ojaqs and their seizure of the lucrative urban iltizams previously controlled by these corps brought a speedy decline to these once powerful Ottoman military units. By his revelation on these points Raymond has offered new insights into the nature of the struggles between the mamluk houses and the Ottoman military units and between the beylicate and the Ottoman regime in eighteenth century Egypt. He has also provided a much clearer picture of the reasons for the sudden rise of the Qazdughli bayt to complete dominance and of the dramatic demise of the ojaq units. The urban *muqata'at* at which Muhammad Bey seems to have inherited from 'Ali Bey were important not just for the lucrative profits they produced for their holder, but were strategically placed within the economic framework of Egypt to give their holder virtual direction of Egypt's domestic and foreign commerce. The majority of the iltizams that we can associate with Muhammad Bey indicate his firm control of Egypt's domestic and international trade and an emphasis on certain products, such as coffee and rice, two products much in demand in the imperial capital of Istanbul.

Muhammad Bey is known to have had control over the iltizams for Suez and Qusayr, the two ports through which the eastern trade, particularly the valuable trade in coffee, passed either into the local Egyptian market or in transit to the Ottoman Empire or Europe. Ray-

49. 'Abd al-Rahīm, *al-Rīf al-Miṣrī*, 120.

50. Raymond, *Artisans et Commerçants*, II, 814-815.

mond has demonstrated the economic importance of this route and has clearly shown the predominance of coffee in that trade.⁵¹ Muhammad Bey was in a position to derive substantial profits from this eastern trade by his control of the ports through which it flowed. 'Ali Bey, Muhammad Bey, and Murād Bey all showed a lively interest in breaking down the barriers placed by both the Ottoman government and the merchant communities of Jidda and Mocha to the expansion of Egypt's eastern trade. All three Qazdughli amirs therefore encouraged the European merchant houses to ignore the sultan's prohibitions against Europeans trading north of Jidda in the Red Sea and sought treaties with the European states to encourage them to rebuild the once important Red Sea trade route between India and the Mediterranean. When, for instance, the English finally brought several shiploads of Indian goods to the port of Suez Muhammad Bey bought their entire cargoes, proving that the mamluk rulers of Egypt were active commercially in all facets of the international trade. The treaty that Muhammad Bey signed with James Bruce to encourage the British merchant houses of India to forward their trade through the Red Sea is discussed in the next chapter, which deals with Muhammad Bey's foreign policy.

The eastern trade was not the only commercial interest of the Qazdughli amirs. Shortly after driving 'Ali Bey from Egypt Muhammad Bey acquired numerous important urban *muqata'at* which regulated the flow of trade through Cairo and northward through the ports of Alexandria, Rosetta, and Damietta into the Mediterranean world. Table 3 demonstrates the control that the Qazdughli leaders maintained over these lucrative *iltizams*, which were previously held by the officers of the *Mustahfizan*.

The registers do not list holders of these *iltizams* for the years 1183-1185 (1770-1772), the period of 'Ali Bey's revolt, nor is there a certified *multazim* for the year 1188 (1774-75), probably because Muhammad Bey was on campaign in Syria at the time the registers were prepared or had just died.⁵² The absence of a certified *multazim* for the years of 'Ali Bey's *mashyakhah* probably indicates that he had seized these *iltizams* himself, for the next registered *multazim* is Muhammad Bey.

51. *Ibid.*, I, 107 ff.

52. Of some minor significance is the reference in these Ottoman records to Muhammad Bey and Ibrahim Bey as either *mir al-liwa* or *qa'immaqam*. Both are Ottoman ranks and preferable in Ottoman documents to the use of the mamluk term *shaykh al-balad*, which was not an official position in the Ottoman administration.

'Ali Bey's omission from the roll probably reflects the Ottoman government's refusal to recognize his usurpation of these revenues. These iltizams represent perhaps the most important ones that the ojaqs controlled in Egypt, so the loss of their profits dealt a staggering economic blow to these military units.

Table 3. Iltizams in the Ports of Alexandria, Rosetta, Damietta, Bulaq and Old Cairo held by Muhammad Bey and Ibrahim Bey

Iltizam and year	Sum (nisf fiddah)	Holder
Muqata'ah of Alexandria and Rosetta		
1186 (1772-73)	5,404,668	Muhammad Bey, mir al-liwa
1187 (1773-74)	"	"
1188 (1774-75)	"	No name recorded
1189 (1775-76)	"	Ibrahim Bey, mir al-liwa, former qa'immaqam
Muqata'ah of Bulaq, Old Cairo, Dabaghana and Radra		
1186	3,512,436	Muhammad Bey, mir al-liwa
1187	"	"
1188	"	No name recorded
1189	"	Ibrahim Bey, mir al-liwa former qa'immaqam
Muqata'ah of Damietta and its dependencies		
1186	1,564,530	Muhammad Bey, mir al-liwa
1187	"	"
1188	"	No name recorded
1189	"	Ibrahim Bey, mir al-liwa former qa'immaqam

Source: Stanford J. Shaw (*The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt: 1517-1798* [Princeton, N. J.: 1962], 380-381) and André Raymond (*Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIII^e siècle* [Damascus: 1974], II, 773-774) both present this information. The figures are here reproduced from Raymond.

With the establishment of his mamluk, the amir Qasim, as *amin al-bahrayn*, or supervisor of the two quays of Bulaq and Old Cairo, Muhammad Bey's control of the ports through which both the domestic and international trade passed was complete.⁵³ He was therefore in a position not just to derive profits from the transfer of goods from Upper

53. Jabarti, II, 21, notes the biography of Qasim Bey.

Égypt to Cairo, from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, from Lower Egypt to the Ottoman Empire, from Europe or Asia to Egypt, but to regulate the quantity and character of that trade. His prohibition of exports from Damietta to Palestine while he was at war with 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir, his insistence that the French establish a vice-consul there to block French ships from illegally carrying grains to Palestine, and his threats to seize French goods if this trade did not stop show not only his interest in this trade but his ability to manipulate it for political purposes (see chapter five). Again, such regulatory power was unique for a mamluk amir of the eighteenth century.

From their vantage points within the Ottoman administration the Qazdughli amirs not only maintained a close supervision over the political life of their vilayet but kept a firm hand on the revenues flowing into and through the Ottoman treasury. Qazdughli officers in the ojaqs not only controlled the revenues previously set aside for the corps but acquired, as we have just seen, control of the most lucrative urban muqata'at. Muhammad Bey's mamluks were also placed in control of such revenue-producing iltizams as the bayt al-mal khassah and the bayt al-mal 'ammah. As defterdar, amir al-hajj, or district kashif Qazdughli amirs were also responsible for the collection of state revenues or the disbursement of sizable sums. It is clear, therefore, that Qazdughli amirs were strategically placed throughout the administration to control and derive profits from virtually the whole system through which produce and revenues moved.

Like his predecessors, Muhammad Bey used the executive authority he had acquired to divert much of the revenue of the Ottoman government of Egypt to his own purposes. By having 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar declared rebels against the sultan, for instance, he was authorized to deduct the expenses of his campaigns against them from the Ottoman treasury. The shari'ah court records are also full of official documents giving Muhammad Bey the right to properties and revenues he desired, of the assignment of the wealth of fallen rivals or the purchase from the Grand Divan of rights to revenues previously enjoyed by others. As long as Muhammad Bey continued to recognize Ottoman sovereignty and to forward the required annual revenues to Istanbul the Ottoman government was hesitant to attempt to stop him from making these deductions from the Imperial Treasury. It should also be noted that the agricultural land he endowed in his large waqf of 1774 had previously been state land, obtained under the signature of

the governor Mustafa Pasha, his protege. Ceremonial recognition of Ottoman sovereignty should not be permitted, therefore, to mask the essential autonomy Muhammad Bey actually enjoyed.

The control of revenues in general, whether from government pensions, salaries paid by the administration, iltizams, or the like, was of no small importance to the head of a mamluk bayt. Whereas the master of the bayt was responsible for the financial support of his mamluks it was essential for him to be able to assign revenues to his mamluks in the form of salaries, pensions, or iltizams from the state and thereby free himself of the direct financial burden of their support. The control of revenues was, in fact, one of the major factors limiting the size of a bayt, so for economic as well as political reasons a mamluk bayt was never in a state of equilibrium, but was always expanding its economic and military power. No property or income was too insignificant to ignore.⁵⁴ 'Ali Bey, for instance, had gained control of revenues that no previous leader of the beylicate had been able to secure, yet the considerable sums generated by the traditional system of agricultural and urban iltizams were never enough for him and his successors, who resorted increasingly to extralegal means to supplement the yield from the iltizam system.

Frequent references in the sources indicate that the personal property including cash, jewels, an urban palace and its furnishings, including slaves, of defeated enemies such as Salih Bey or Shaykh Humam were seized by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey, but there is no way of estimating the value of these seizures. We do know that the personal liquid wealth of some of the amirs was considerable, as suggested by the estimate of the value of the personal treasure with which 'Ali Bey fled Egypt in 1772. Another form of income came from the sums extorted by those in authority from individuals or communities having dealings with them. An age-old system of what the French called *avanie* was well imbedded in the Middle East and regulated by tradition and local custom. The heads of government, the pashas and beys, but also customs officials, police officials, and others having access to the ruler, customarily received "gifts" on special occasions from all those having dealings with them. By tradition these were moderate sums, but the Qazdughli amirs came to use the *avanie* as a significant source of income to support their grandiose

54. It is perhaps in this spirit that Muhammad Bey acquired a small Nile island in East Atfiyah after having a judge ascertain that it was available. See SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 280, 20, 10.

schemes. Once the usual restraints to their tyranny were eliminated the Qazdughli leaders quickly increased the frequency and size of these demands for extraordinary payments.

French consular complaints against the *avanie* began to take on a more concerned tone during the *mashyakhah* of 'Ali Bey al-Ghazzawi (1757-1760), who was portrayed as being decidedly anti-Christian.⁵⁵ The succession of 'Ali Bey Balut Kapan hardly improved matters for the French. In 1763 'Ali Bey first demanded a ransom of 500 purses for the release of priests of the order of Terre Sainte whom he had arrested, but settled for a promised payment of 250 purses. In 1764 d'Amirat was already complaining of the unusual vexations, cruelties, and tyranny endured by the community in Cairo.⁵⁶ The largest single blow to the financial stability of the French commercial establishments was delivered by Khalil Bey, who during his brief *mashyakhah* forced the French to pay an *avanie* of 30,000 pataques, a staggering sum. In 1768, the following year, Khalil levied a sum of 18,000 pataques upon Damietta to help pay for his campaign against 'Ali Bey.⁵⁷ The lawlessness of the beys and the demands against all minority and commercial communities increased considerably after Khalil's defeat.

In 1769 'Ali Bey, whose favoritism to the Venetians was particularly galling to the French, began the practice of demanding goods of the French for his personal use. That year he requested of them cloth sufficient to decorate his palace. As the French feared, this practice immediately became a custom and 'Ali Bey renewed these requests on an annual basis. Then in 1773 Muhammad Bey requested a carriage and four horses from the French. The trading houses spent eighteen months obtaining the gift, which would have been the only coach in Egypt, but it arrived only at the time of Muhammad Bey's death in Palestine. The coach was then offered by the French to Ibrahim Bey, the new *shaykh al-balad*, and the animals were bought by the customs agent (at less than cost) and presented by him to Ibrahim Bey as a gift.⁵⁸

55. AN, B1, 332 (Le Caire), May 11, 1758, November 22, 1758, July 28, 1759.

56. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), December 16, 1763.

57. AN, B1, 333 (Le Caire), December 14, 1767; AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), June 16, 1768.

58. AN, B1, 334 (Le Caire), March 2, 1769; Georges Douin, "La Carosse de Mohamed Bey," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte*, 8 (1926), 165-184, contains the story of the coach and four which the author extracted from French archival sources at Marseilles.

The lawlessness of the period, the lifting of restraints that normally held the mamluks in check, and the greed of the Qazdughli amirs are all factors that help to explain the growing tyranny of 'Ali Bey and his successors, but it was the spiraling cost of their foreign wars that forced the Qazdughli amirs to impose unprecedented avanies upon the populace. To help pay for his Syrian campaign, for instance, 'Ali Bey raised the following sums through the avanie:

- 100 ardabs of rice from each merchant (or 700 cubic feet)
- 200,000 pataques from coffee imports
- 200,000 pataques in additional taxes levied on villages
- 150,000 pataques from three native muslim merchants
- 140,000 pataques from non-Coptic Christians
- 66,000 pataques from customs officials
- 100,000 pataques from Copts
- 36,000 pataques from other government officials

Livingstone, who cites this information found in a Venetian consular document, notes that it does not include a sum of 40,000 pataques paid by the Jewish merchants and other sums extorted from individuals.⁵⁹ 'Ali Bey also resorted to the device of securing a forced loan from the French establishment in Acre. This he arranged through the French consul in Cairo, who was unable to resist 'Ali Bey's demands for a letter of credit. The Acre "loan" was the first secured from them by the beys of Egypt, who would prove to be bad risks and cause the French to suffer substantial financial losses in the next five years.

'Ali Bey had promised the French political protection and had seen their trade in his domains increase and prosper.⁶⁰ A recapitulation of ~~European trade with Egypt for the year 1776~~ gives an indication of the preeminent position enjoyed by the French in Egypt's trade with Europe (see table 4). Despite the sums they lost through 'Ali Bey's frequent extortions, their business had grown considerably and their profits soared. Although there are numerous complaints against the avanie in the French consular reports of this period, Venture de Paradis, a young interpreter attached to the consulate in Cairo, admitted that "the forced loans of merchandise, the considerable loans of money which were never reimbursed were immense, but commerce

59. Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey Al-Kabir and the Jews," 226 n. 2.

60. Livingstone (ibid., 226 n. 3) and Raymond (*Artisans et Commerçants*, I, 184) speak of the profits of French trade in Egypt despite the avanies. Raymond (I, 99-100) mentions the internal prosperity of Egypt during the period 1736-1780. Gran (*Islamic Roots of Capitalism*) also views the period as one of increasing economic prosperity.

was good and compensated the losses."⁶¹ 'Ali Bey therefore continued to reject the protests of the French against his continuing demands for *avanies*, feeling that the increase in the volume of their trade ought to support these additional payments. He could not understand that his practices were driving many of the smaller French establishments to bankruptcy. As early as 1769 d'Amirat suggested that the French would have to relocate their establishments in Alexandria because of the growing tyranny of the beys and the lawlessness that made it dangerous for the French even to show themselves on the streets of Cairo. Already by 1771 'Ali Bey's pressure upon the French led three French establishments to withdraw from the capital. In the end, 'Ali Bey's extortions had caused the French over 100,000 pataques in losses, a sum that many of the commercial houses could not endure.⁶²

Table 4. Recapitulation of European Commerce in Egypt for the year 1776 (French livres)

Entering		Leaving	
French: Cairo	1,293,746	French: Cairo	1,054,435
Alexandria	224,152	Alexandria	97,751
Rosetta	81,148	Rosetta	77,994
Damietta	no figures	Damietta	no figures
Total	1,599,046	Total	1,230,180
Venetian	308,014	Venetian	328,025
Livornese and British	857,464	Livornese and British	839,854
Total	2,764,524	Total	2,398,059

Ships coming to Alexandria		Ships coming to Damietta	
French	225	French	72
Venetian	92	Venetian	2
Livornese	2	English	2
English	8	Ragusan	4
Swedish	2		
Neapolitan	1	Total	80
Ragusan	25		
Russian	2		
Total	357		

Source: AN, B1, 336 (Le Caire), Recapitulation of European Commerce in Egypt for 1776. There are no figures for ships using Rosetta. By contrast, only 129 French ships visited Alexandria in 1757 and 101 in 1758. See AN, B1, 108 (Alexandrie), March 19, 1758 and January 10, 1759.

61. Cited by Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey Al-Kabir and the Jews," p. 226 n. 3.

62. AN, B1, 336 (Le Caire), June 20, 1776.

The flight of 'Ali Bey from Egypt in 1772 temporarily relieved the pressure on the French, whose affairs were watched with benevolent interest by Muhammad Bey. Jabarti, it will be remembered, had mentioned the calm that prevailed in Egypt during the *mashyakhah* of Muhammad Bey and had remarked that commercial affairs were going well. In 1774 a French report also noted that harmony had reigned for a long time. The new French consul Mure wrote only a few months later, however, that "The history of the French establishment at Cairo is a series of exactions and revolutionary violence."⁶³ Muhammad Bey dealt fairly with the French, but did not abandon the customary practice of the *avanie*. In the spring of 1773, for instance, he received 8,000 pataques from them, then immediately demanded 15,000 sequins more. In the fall of that year he asked for another 30,000 sequins. To help pay for his Syrian campaign of 1775 he again levied a general *avanie* upon the entire nation, demanding 300 pataques from every village, securing large advances from merchants engaged in the coffee trade of the Red Sea, and obtaining 7,200 pataques from the French, among others.⁶⁴

The premature death of Muhammad Bey in 1775 brought a return to "revolutionary violence" as the various factions struggled for control of the beylicate. Continuing violence and the imposition of more *avanies* finally forced the consulate to relocate in Alexandria in 1777 and reduced the French commercial establishments in Cairo to five. ~~The Qazdughli leaders had fostered a significant growth of foreign trade in their domains, but had not provided the political stability and commercial security to permit it to establish itself on firm foundations.~~ The greed and shortsightedness of the beys led to the financial ruin of many of these establishments in both Egypt and the Levant. But the French were not the only community from whom the Qazdughli amirs had extorted extraordinary sums. The Venetians and Muslim merchants who specialized in the Red Sea trade were also extorted of vast amounts. None, however, had their position so disadvantageously transformed by 'Ali Bey's actions as the Jewish customs agents who previous to his second *mashyakhah* had enjoyed virtually monopoly control over the tax farms of the major customs houses in Egypt.

The sudden demise of the Jewish customs agents is directly related

63. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), November 20, 1774.

64. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 20, 1774, June 6, 1775, April 24, 1775; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), October 23, 1773.

to the equally dramatic rise of the Syrian Christian merchants who replaced them. These Syrian families had sought political refuge in Egypt during the eighteenth century and by mid-century had worked their way deeply into the business community in Cairo so that they were in a position to challenge the control the indigenous Jewish community traditionally held over the customs houses. These Syrians, ~~Maronites~~ and Melkites, had found natural political allies among the French merchants, who tried to extend their own capitulatory rights to their coreligionists through the sale of *berats* (documents granting capitulatory privileges to their holder) to their leading members. The Jews on the other hand had allied themselves with the Venetians, from whom they purchased their *berats*. An intense political struggle for control of the customs houses broke out rather early in 'Ali Bey's second *mashyakhah*, pitting the Syrian Christians and their French supporters against the incumbent Jewish multazims and their Venetian allies. The crisis seems to have been brought about by 'Ali Bey's desperate need for substantially larger revenues, the covetousness of the Syrian Christians, and the tyrannical practice of the Jews in levying their own *avanies* upon the foreign, particularly French, merchants.

The central figure in the Syrians' drive to replace the Jewish customs agents was Mikha'il Fakhr, who had obtained a position as undercommissioner of the Damietta customs in the 1750s. Fakhr is reported by Lusignan to have had the protection of Ibrahim Katkhuda and to have been a favorite of 'Ali Bey.⁶⁵ When 'Ali Bey secured the *mashyakhah* he gave to Mikha'il Fakhr the *iltizam* for the Damietta customs. Learning from Fakhr that the Jewish customs agents habitually levied exorbitant *avanies* of their own against the European merchants, and eager to claim this right himself, 'Ali Bey accepted the complaints against the Jews and determined to end their traditional hold over the customs houses of Egypt. Yusuf Levi, head of the Alexandria customs, was beaten to death in 1768 and his considerable wealth was seized by 'Ali Bey. In January, 1769, Ishaq al-Yahudi, multazim of the Bulaq customs house, was first extorted of a huge sum and then beaten to death. At the same time the Jewish merchant community was subjected to repeated and exorbitant *avanies* which, in sum, destroyed their commerce and broke their political power. Their places as directors of the customs houses of Egypt were allotted by 'Ali Bey to members of the Syrian Christian community. Mikha'il Fakhr was at first placed in charge of the important Alexandria customs and

65. Lusignan, vii.

Yusuf Bitar assumed Fakhr's previous post in Damietta, but Fakhr soon imposed his own avanies on the foreign merchants, ran afoul of 'Ali Bey, and was replaced in 1772. Yusuf Bitar was moved to Alexandria and his place as director of the Damietta customs was taken by Mikha'il Jamal. They in turn were replaced by Muhammad Bey, who named other Syrians, Antun Phara'un and Antun Qassis, to these posts.⁶⁶

Within the brief span of a few years the Jews had been stripped of their long established control over the customs houses of Egypt and lost their political influence. In reviewing the sudden eclipse of the Jewish merchant community in Egypt Livingstone concludes that 'Ali Bey's policies against them were not seemingly the result of religious persecution. The Jews, strategically placed in control of important revenues, were simply an easy target for the rapacious 'Ali Bey.⁶⁷ Livingstone's conclusion seems sound, for 'Ali Bey was no respecter of religions as he squeezed the nation for more funds. He demonstrated almost equal disregard for the sensibilities of his coreligionists.

Throughout the eighteenth century the mamluks competed with the ulama and regimental officers for control of the revenues of the mosques, *wikalahs* (commercial depots), and other revenue-producing structures established as *awqaf* for the benefit of the religious community. For most of the century specific lucrative *awqaf*, such as those of the mosque of al-Imam al-Shafi'i, of the Imam al-Layth, and the mosques of the sultans of the pre-Ottoman mamluk empire remained in the hands of the amirs.⁶⁸ 'Ali Bey accelerated the contest for control of the *nizarahs* (supervision) of religious edifices by acquiring far more *nizarahs* than any of his predecessors. Among the *awqaf* over which he gained control were those of Sinan Pasha, Sultan Murad, and al-Azhar itself.⁶⁹ Many *awqaf* were assigned to his mamluks, thus relieving his own treasury of the burden of their support. One even finds reference to a *waqf* that 'Ali Bey assigned in

66. This struggle between the Jews and the Syrian Christians for control of the customs houses of Egypt is briefly reviewed in Livingstone's " 'Ali Bey Al-Kabir and the Jews." Livingstone at least implies that it was Muhammad Bey who took away his *iltizam* for the Alexandria customs, but AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), March 23, 1772, states that 'Ali Bey replaced him as director of this customs house with Yusuf Bitar.

67. Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey Al-Kabir and the Jews," 225.

68. See the indexes of the SCA, *Taqārīr al-Nazar* series for the appropriate years.

69. SCA, *Fihrist Taqārīr al-Nazar min Sanat 1181 li Ghayat Sanat 1190*, under " 'Ali Bey".

1768 to one Muhammad Bey 'Ali, he being, of course, Abu al-Dhahab.⁷⁰

The move to gain control of the revenues of the religious community was well under way when Muhammad Bey seized the leadership of the beylicate, then was brought to an abrupt halt for the short period of his mashyakhah, but was resumed again with even more intensity after his death. There is no evidence in the registers relating to the supervision of awqaf that Muhammad Bey acquired the nizarah of any of the awqaf endowed in favor of the numerous schools, mosques, fountains, and the like other than his own. It seems possible from the absence of familiar names in these registers during the short period of his mashyakhah that he also forbade his own mamluks from usurping the revenues of the Muslim community or even acquiring the supervision of its awqaf. One suspicious exception is the frequent appearance in these registers of the name of Muhammad Badawi, later to become agent for Muhammad Bey in the transactions connected with the creation of his own famous waqf. 'Abd al-Rahman, the former agha of the Mustahfizan who had helped considerably in rallying the ojaqs to Muhammad Bey's cause, was given the supervision of al-Azhar, which 'Ali Bey had previously held, but this seems a political favor for someone who had performed a considerable service for Muhammad Bey. There is no reference in these registers to Ibrahim or Murad until after Muhammad Bey's death, at which time the earlier practice seems to have been accelerated to the point where it became a genuine assault by the mamluks on the nizarahs of the awqaf of the Muslim religious institutions. Yusuf Bey, Ibrahim Bey, Murad Bey and others seized the nizarahs from the ulama, drove shaykhs from their positions, and often withheld the revenues of the awqaf completely. The waqf established for the support of his large collegiate-mosque did not function for more than a year after the death of Muhammad Bey before his mamluks usurped its revenues and caused most of its many functions to be suspended.⁷¹ Having gained control of the nizarah of al-Azhar, for instance, Ibrahim Bey withheld its funds on several occasions, thereby provoking riots and a serious crisis with the

70. Ibid., under "Muhammad Bey". He acquired the supervision of the waqf of Shaykh Abu al-Fadl on October 25, 1768 (13 Jumad Akhir, 1182). On June 4, 1768 (18 Muharram, 1182), the supervision of the waqf of Hasan Pasha was assigned to a Muhammad Bey, but he seems to be a different Muhammad Bey. This waqf had previously been supervised by the Amir Ahmad, katkhuda of the Mustahfizan.

71. Jabarti, I, 419; II, 232.

populace. These assaults upon the awqaf of the Muslim community were not made during Muhammad Bey's brief mashyakhah, which appears to be a short period of respite for the ulama in the struggle they had to wage with the mamluks throughout most of the century. It was a struggle from which they emerged defeated in the nineteenth century, their financial independence having been virtually ended by the maneuvers of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha.

—In addition to the "state" revenues the Qazdughli leaders were able to derive from the system of iltizams and awqaf and from the practice of extortion, these amirs also actively sought personal profits in a broad range of economic activities at various levels of the economy. Not only was the shaykh al-balad the ubiquitous tax collector, the chief multazim, the supervisor of the lucrative awqaf, or the great extortioner, he also became a speculative land baron, an urban landlord, a dominant trader, and a grasping monopolist. In examining the sources of the personal wealth, as opposed to the state revenues, of but one of the Qazdughli rulers, in this case Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab, it becomes apparent that no economic endeavor was too insignificant to escape the interest of an amir if it could turn a profit.

Muhammad Bey's participation at various levels of the economy is revealed in several court documents and in the lengthy waqfiyah that established his large waqf in favor of the collegiate-mosque he constructed facing the main entrance to al-Azhar mosque. They indicate that in addition to the control he exercised over the general flow of domestic and foreign trade and from which he derived profits he was also involved in the storage, distribution, and sale of products for a significant segment of the Bulaq and Cairo markets. His waqfiyah, for instance, lists a wide range of urban commercial property which he personally owned and included in his waqf. The two largest commercial buildings were the Khan al-Zaraksha next to his mosque and the qaysariyah in Bulaq which he had acquired from 'Ali Bey's estate and which was built on land belonging to the sixteenth-century waqf of the Ottoman governor Sinan Pasha. The qaysariyah of two stories included twenty-three shops and was strategically located to receive the goods unloaded at the port of Bulaq only a few steps away. The Khan al-Zaraksha, in the very heart of the pulsating bazaar area of Cairo, was three stories high and included shops and residences.⁷² Raymond has already pointed out that the beys of the

72. Described in Muhammad Bey's lengthy waqfiyah, MA, *Daftarkhanah*, waqfiyah no. 900 (Cairo). See my translation of this waqfiyah in *Journal of the*

eighteenth century took an active interest in building and operating these large commercial structures, known variously as khans, wikalahs, or qaysariyahs, because of the substantial profits they turned.⁷³

The waqfiyah also speaks of coffeehouses, ovens, and residences, most of which Muhammad Bey purchased before demolition to make room for his collegiate-mosque. He had thirty-three shops (*dukkān*, *dakakīn*) built into the base of his edifice to help provide an income for the complex and its activities. They belonged to the waqf, but he also owned small commercial or residential property in the heart of the city. The shari'ah court records reveal Muhammad Bey to have been an active buyer, through his agent Muhammad Badawi, of small shops or residences in the area around the bazaar. They do not seem to have brought any substantial profit as individual ventures, but the sum of their value nevertheless is impressive. These purchases indicate an acquisitive urge on the part of Muhammad Bey, who quickly burrowed himself into the center of Cairo's commercial district. One particular document demonstrates better than others the extent of his urban real estate ventures and the lengths to which he would go in search of profit. It appears from this document that Muhammad Bey had used his political influence to obtain from the Grand Divan a certification that a large number of people had given up their interests (through *isqat*, the relinquishing of rights) in a sizable amount of endowed commercial property in the heart of Cairo's business district. Among the rents or profits acquired by Muhammad Bey in this transaction were those of the land on which the Khan al-Hanna was built, a qaysariyah in the Khan al-Khalili, the Khan al-Nahhas, and numerous shops in the center of the city.⁷⁴

While we may point out his control of the flow of Cairo's domestic trade through his management of the two Nile quays at Bulaq and Old Cairo and can note that he owned or controlled numerous depots and shops around the city, particularly in the Khan al-Khalili district, we are not in a position to elucidate what role, if any, he played in the actual sale or distribution of goods or to determine if he was involved with particular products or with specific guilds. His business interests in the heart of the city's commercial zone and his control of several key offices, such as those of the amin al-bahrayn and *muhtasib*, gave him,

American Research Center in Egypt, 15 (1978), 83-105.

73. Raymond, *Artisans et Commerçants*, II, 712-717.

74. SCA, al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 201, 223, 161.

if he cared to use it, considerable influence in the everyday affairs of the city's commercial activities.⁷⁵

Muhammad Bey's waqfiyah suggests that private property could be acquired in various ways. The shaykh al-balad purchased much of the property on the site of his desired construction, but some seemed to have been exchanged or sold under duress. The fact that some of the property was already endowed in other awqaf posed only a minor problem, for he could acquire the right to build on land endowed in waqf simply by paying an agreed *hikr*, or lease payment, to the supervisor of that waqf. In his case almost all of the land upon which he wanted to build his collegiate-mosque was part of the fifteenth-century waqf of the mamluk sultan al-Ghuri. Buildings protected in waqf could be exchanged, as was done in this case, either for property elsewhere or for money, and then demolished. In other cases one could acquire specified rights to use property, either land or buildings, by paying the *hikr*. The rights to build on waqf property, or to renovate buildings encumbered in waqf, or the right to enjoy the profits derived from waqf property could be assigned for a period of ninety-nine years, at which time the property returned to the control of its original waqf unless the lease was renewed.

Muhammad Bey's acquisition of private property was not limited to Cairo, for all the agricultural lands he encumbered in his waqf were scattered in Gharbiyah and Girga provinces. The documents supporting his waqfiyah state that these lands were assigned to him as *mulk*, or private property, by the Ottoman government in Cairo (in this case by his protege Mustafa Pasha al-Nabulsi) and confirmed by imperial rescripts from Istanbul. The waqfiyah specifically mentions a *taqsit*, or legal document granting miri (state) lands as private property to the person designated in the document, given to Muhammad Bey by the Ottoman government.⁷⁶ Several other taqsits delivering miri lands as private property to Muhammad Bey have also been found in the court records.⁷⁷ This method of transforming state lands into private property, then into waqf, was particularly disruptive of the

75. His personal mamluk, the Amir Qasim, katkhuda of the 'Azaban, supervised the customs of the two quays at Bulaq and Old Cairo. His follower, the Amir 'Abd al-Rahman, was agha of the Mustahfizan, muhtasib, or supervisor, of the markets, and *nazir* (supervisor) of al-Azhar. See Jabarti, II, 36-37, for 'Abd al-Rahman Agha's biography.

76. MA, *Daftarkhanah*, waqfiyah no. 900, 43.

77. SCA, al-Diwan al-'Ali, 2, 219, 17, cites two taqsits that turned over to Muhammad Bey lands in Gharbiyah and Girga provinces.

Ottoman tax system throughout the empire, for miri lands once producing revenues for the state were being turned into waqf at an alarming rate, and their revenues were being redirected toward the support of religious structures, social services, or private families.

The personal fortunes assembled by a Qazdughli shaykh al-balad in the second half of the eighteenth century through all these economic activities were enormous, but extremely difficult to calculate owing to the difficulty in separating the private wealth of the ruler from the state revenues that he controlled and the many ways in which a shaykh al-balad received his income. Raymond and Walz have used the inheritance registers (*mukhallifat*) of the shari'ah court to good advantage in their excellent studies, but these documents only include the liquid wealth of the deceased. They do not take into account the revenues assigned from iltizams, the sums allotted for the performance of state duties, or the possible one-third of the entire wealth of the deceased that could be protected in waqf. The French consul Mure, for instance, reported that upon the death of Muhammad Bey his mamluks divided his wealth, said to be of the value of 20 million, among themselves.⁷⁸ This sum, probably expressed in nisf fiddahs, would be equal to 800 purses. Almost certainly, it represents only the liquid wealth, the money, jewels, and other movable possessions owned by Muhammad Bey and does not reflect the true value of his vast land holdings and urban real estate. Nor does the figure include the income from the lucrative iltizams he controlled before his death. Mure's figure is therefore but an indicator of the actual wealth assembled from various sources by a Qazdughli shaykh al-balad of the second half of the eighteenth century.

To this point I have stressed the fundamental unity of purpose of the separate regimes of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey. My view is that the two mashyakhahs represent a single uninterrupted period of Qazdughli self-aggrandizement during which the two Qazdughli amirs together secured total military supremacy over the political structure of Egypt, imposed their complete control over the administration, burrowed themselves deeply into the economy, and initiated a set of programs that heralded a new era in Egyptian history. The remainder of this chapter deals with the one aspect of Muhammad Bey's regime that differed substantially from that of his predecessor and master, his relations with the ulama and his adherence to Muslim tradition.

78. Cited in Douin, "La Carosse de Mohamed Bey," 183.

/'Ali Bey was the first shaykh al-balad to surround himself with Christian advisors and initiate a foreign policy that, while advantageous to himself, was equally beneficial to the Christian powers of Europe. It is not unusual, therefore, that he did not give the same consideration as his predecessors to the ulama and to Muslim public opinion. Although he did not break entirely with Islamic tradition he nevertheless demonstrated some of the attitudes that were to guide the relations between the ulama and the successors of Muhammad Bey.

Muhammad Bey was the last mamluk ruler of Egypt to uphold the medieval traditions that bound ruler and ulama together, for he supported the ulama and their institutions in the traditional manner and accepted their counsel according to customs more than a thousand years old. His death marked the passing of an era in Egypt, for the next generation of amirs, though carrying on many of the traditions, interfered in religious affairs, usurped the revenues of awqaf established for the ulama and their institutions (as 'Ali Bey seems to have done), and destroyed the harmonious relationship between themselves and the ulama that had been so beneficial to both parties throughout the traditional period.

The Qazdughli bayt had been generous in its support of the ulama and religious institutions. In deference to tradition, representatives of the Qazdughliyah such as Ibrahim Katkhuda, 'Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda, and Muhammad Bey had given impressive financial support to religious institutions and had accepted the counsel of the ulama in their political deliberations. These were not the only Qazdughli amirs who encumbered extensive revenues for the support of mosques, schools, and the like. 'Ali Bey, for instance, encumbered over 17,000 feddans to help support the extensive additions he made to the mosque complex of Sidi Ahmad al-Badawi in Tanta and refurbished the dome of the mosque of the Imam al-Shafi'i in Old Cairo, and Murad Bey repaired the mosque of Amr ibn al-'As, the first mosque built in Egypt after the Muslim conquest in 641.⁷⁹ But constructions by the Qazdughli amirs were not confined to religious edifices. Commercial buildings such as wikalahs and rows upon rows of shops were built or refurbished, then encumbered for the support of religious struc-

79. Jabarti, I, 382; III, 170; Ramaḍān, *'Alī Bey al-Kabīr*, 97. 'Ali Bey's waqfiyah for the mosque complex of Sidi al-Badawi is preserved in MA, *Daftarkhanah*, waqfiyah no. 743.

tures. Egypt experienced a veritable building boom under the various Qazdughli regimes.

It is true that Muhammad Bey's successors continued to establish awqaf and to build religious edifices, but the very character of the relationship between the ulama and the amirs had changed perceptibly with the death of Muhammad Bey. Jabarti noted that Muhammad Bey's mamluks, unlike their predecessors, did not "conduct themselves any longer according to the rules of equality and justice, as they had done. The mamluks purchased by them and trained in their principles become habituated in their youth to cruelties and inequities. Their insensitive conduct spread calamities and misfortune over the country. . . ." ⁸⁰ The decline of the ulama as a political and social force, so evident in the era of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in the nineteenth century, can be traced to the career of 'Ali Bey, ~~who seized their revenues with abandon, but more properly dates from the death of Muhammad Bey and the transition to the despotic regime created by his personal mamluks.~~ Most notable among these amirs who destroyed the traditional relationship between the military elites and the ulama were Yusuf Bey, Ibrahim Bey, and Murad Bey. These rapacious amirs usurped the revenues of the awqaf endowed in favor of the ulama and their institutions, interfered in their private affairs, and ignored their counsel. There were numerous instances in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the ulama were driven to protest against the tyranny of Muhammad Bey's successors. They were to experience a brief "Golden Age" as a result of the disruptions caused by the French occupation of 1798-1801, but the intimate social relations with the military elites which had characterized traditional government, and which were the basis of their political influence and financial strength, had been seriously frayed. Where they had previously entered the councils of the amirs as valued friends, learned scholars, and intimate advisers, they now came as angry supplicants, as protesters of illegal exactions, and as representatives of an oppressed minority. Muhammad 'Ali's expulsion of the ulama from his councils represented but the final divorce following a separation of several decades. Muhammad Bey appears in retrospect, therefore, to have been the last shaykh al-balad to consciously uphold religious tradition in Egypt.

The chief manifestations of Muhammad Bey's religious character were his adherence to Muslim traditions, his respect for the ulama, the

80. Jabarti, I, 430.

close social ties he maintained with them, his acceptance of their counsel, his attention to their needs, his concern for the application of justice in their cases, and, of course, his generous support of their institutions and activities. The entire character of Muhammad Bey's regime was religious, for Muhammad Bey presents a faithful image of a model Muslim prince ruling in the interests and with the help of the religious establishment. His fierce prejudice against the Christian institutions of Terre Sainte was a direct counterpoint to 'Ali Bey's decidedly pro-Christian policies. Yet evidence suggests that it was the foreign, Catholic, institutions that were Muhammad Bey's target, for Jabarti asserts that Ibrahim Jawhari, Muhammad Bey's Coptic secretary, had considerable influence and that (Coptic) Christian churches were repaired and many (Christian) awqaf were established during Muhammad Bey's reign.⁸¹

From the time of his introduction into Egypt Muhammad Bey showed deep respect for Muslim traditions and cultivated the close friendship of the ulama, whether Egyptian or foreign. This relationship, which had so much political advantage in his struggle with 'Ali Bey, appears sincere, for it was continued throughout his career. If anything, it grew more intense and more beneficial to the ulama as his personal fortunes prospered, culminating in the erection of the large collegiate-mosque for the shaykhs he admired and in the serious weakening of the various Catholic missions in Egypt and Palestine. Examples of Muhammad Bey's amicable relations with the ulama are easily found and contrast sharply with those that characterized the regimes of his successors.

Jabarti informs us that the ulama were always well received by Muhammad Bey. Upon his return to Cairo from several years of foreign travel to avoid personal debts, the Jerusalem-born alim al-Imam Sayyid 'Ali ibn al-Naqib had an audience with Muhammad Bey in which the outspoken shaykh complained about the low regard in which men of religion were held in Istanbul and Cairo. The shaykh al-balad thereupon gave him the sum of 100,000 nisf fiddah to demonstrate his own generosity to the ulama. The shaykh paid off his debts, then distributed the remainder of the sum for pious purposes. Upon his death Muhammad Bey donated another 500 pataques to his brother, Sayyid Badr al-Din, for his proper burial.⁸² When Muhammad Bey endowed his own religious edifice he personally

81. *Ibid.*, II, 262.

82. *Ibid.*, I, 373.

selected all the shaykhs who were to teach or perform services in the structure, demonstrating thereby a personal familiarity with a large number of Cairo's ulama. Among those chosen were his two favorites, Shaykh Hasan al-Kafrawi and Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi.

Muhammad Bey had known Shaykh Hasan al-Kafrawi, the Shafi'i mufti, for some time, for Jabarti tells us that even before he became shaykh al-balad Muhammad Bey would assist with the shaykh's lessons at the mosque of al-Husayn during the month of Ramadan.⁸³ Muhammad Bey chose him to occupy the chair of the Shafi'i rite in his mosque and also designated him shaykh of all studies in the madrasah. Unfortunately, Shaykh al-Kafrawi ran afoul of the amir Yusuf Bey almost immediately after the death of Muhammad Bey and was driven from office by Yusuf, who had become supervisor of his master's waqf.⁸⁴

Muhammad Bey's personal relations with Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi were even more intimate. This shaykh, born in the Upper Egyptian village of Bani 'Addi, was the main link between Muhammad Bey and the people. Shaykh 'Ali enjoyed such enormous favor with the shaykh al-balad that he could lecture him without fear of reprisal. Jabarti notes that Shaykh 'Ali would appear before the amir every two or three days armed with petitions from supplicants who wanted their cases resolved and adds that the amir never rejected a request brought by the shaykh. Playing upon the religious sentiments of the amir, the shaykh would present his own resolution of the case and then wait for the amir to confirm it. On the occasions when Muhammad Bey balked the shaykh would remind his sovereign of the last judgment and the fact his deeds would be judged by the supreme judge. For added emphasis he would tell the amir, "Fear the torments of hell," and taking his hand, would say, "I fear the eternal fire may take this charming hand." Shaykh 'Ali was given a chair in Muhammad Bey's madrasah from which he taught selections from the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari. It was he who delivered the opening remarks on the occasion of the inauguration of Muhammad Bey's great complex and it was he who assured Muhammad Bey's corpse proper burial in his edifice.⁸⁵

Another example demonstrates the generous manner in which Muhammad Bey dealt with the ulama. After buying the famous work, *Taj al-'Arus*, from its author, Shaykh Murtada, for the princely sum of

83. Ibid., II, 165.

84. Ibid., 165-166.

85. Ibid., I, 414, 416, 419.

100,000 silver dirhams, he placed it among the books of the library he endowed in his collegiate-mosque, thereby making this valuable source available for use by students and shaykhs alike.⁸⁶

A final word may be said about the general character of Muhammad Bey's regime, which appears to have maintained excellent relations with the religious community. It is clear that Jabarti liked Muhammad Bey, for he has many kind words to say about him. It is equally clear that Jabarti's reasons stemmed from the respect Muhammad Bey gave to the ulama, the generosity he showed them, the weight he gave to their counsel, and the close personal relations he maintained with them. Muhammad Bey's religiosity characterized his entire regime and spread to those around him. His ally, Isma'il Bey, was likewise characterized by this traditional attitude toward the ulama and religious principles. Many amirs in Muhammad Bey's retinue built religious structures for the ulama. Others maintained the closest personal relations with them and continually demonstrated the traditional respect of the military caste for the men of the pen. There was the Amir 'Ali Agha al-Mi'mar, for instance, who assisted with the lessons of Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi every day at Muhammad Bey's madrasah.⁸⁷

Muhammad Bey's generosity toward the ulama was immense. The endowment of his religious complex was enormous, including as it did substantial urban commercial property and extensive agricultural lands. But his famous waqf was not the extent of his setting aside of property in favor of the religious community. Several other awqaf of much lesser importance have been located in the shari'ah court records. On February 11, 1775 (Ghayat Dhu al-Qa'dah, 1188), Muhammad Bey constituted 1 *qirat* of the agricultural land of Zifta Gawad in Gharbiyah province in waqf in favor of the small zawiyah of al-Sadat al-Wafa'iyah in the lesser cemetery (al-Qarafah al-Sughra) of Old Cairo. This land he had acquired in another taqsit from his client Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Egypt. The revenues of the waqf were to be paid annually in the following modest amounts: 2,000 nisf fiddah for the *sabil* (fountain) and water for the zawiyah, 1,000 nisf fiddah for clothes for the servants of the zawiyah, 2,000 nisf fiddah for the *mawlid al-kabir* of the Sadat, and 2,500 nisf fiddah each Monday night for the reading of the Qur'an. The supervisor of this waqf was Muhammad Abu Anwar al-Sadat, a young shaykh who was destined to have a

86. Ibid., II, 199.

87. Ibid., 19.

brilliant political career as leader of the Wafa'iyah Sadat in Egypt.⁸⁸

There is also evidence of a fountain, or fountains, Muhammad Bey endowed in the lesser cemetery, for the registers relating to the supervision of awqaf contain frequent references to a fountain "in the turbah of the mosque of al-Imam al-Shafi'i", to a fountain "in al-Qarafah al-Sughra", or to the "fountain of Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab."⁸⁹ The original waqfiyah appears to have been lost and only references to the waqf have been located. It is entirely possible that these numerous references refer to the same fountain which the amir constructed in the lesser cemetery. Finally, in April, 1774, Muhammad Bey endowed the palace of Qasr al-'Ayni and its surrounding gardens, which were adjacent to the *takiyah* (monastery) of the Bektashi order, for the benefit of the Bektashi dervishes.⁹⁰ Small wonder, therefore, that the traditional 'alim al-Jabarti would mourn the premature death of Muhammad Bey and the succession of Ibrahim and Murad.

88. SCA, al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 196, 231, 240 (Ghayat Dhu al-Qa'adah, 1188).

89. References to this fountain, or fountains, can be found in SCA, *Taqārūr al-Nazar* series, 17, 170, 30; 18, 209, 36; 38, 93, 526; 39, 20, 132; 39, 48, 303; 43, 270, 1271.

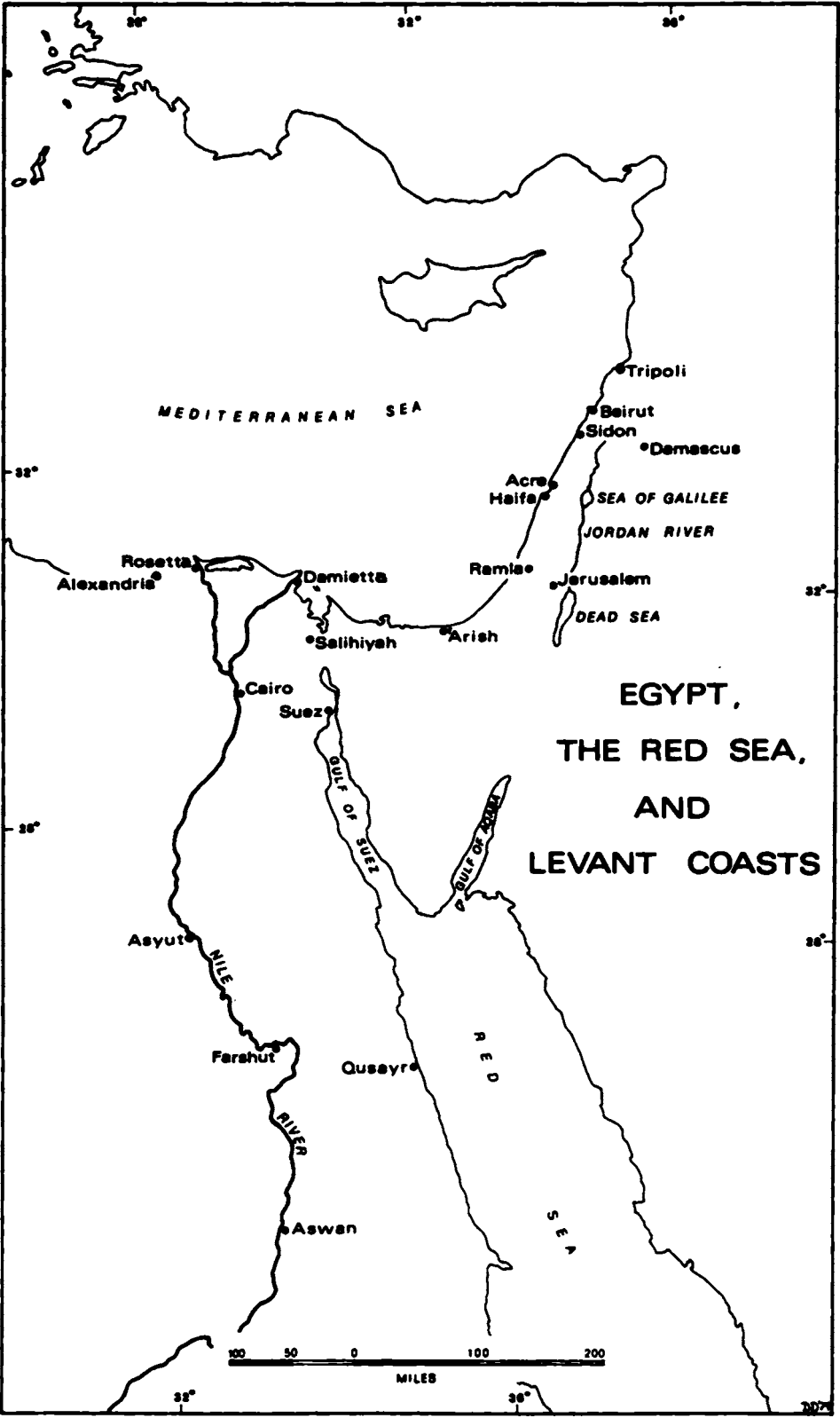
90. Cited by F. de Jong, *Ṭuruq and Ṭuruq-Linked Institutions in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Leiden: 1978), 26 n. 114.

The Foreign Relations of Muhammad Bey

The emergence of Muhammad Bey as the ruler of Egypt in the spring of 1772 had an immediate effect upon the formal relations between the Egyptian vilayet and the Ottoman central government but did not slow the Qazdughli drive for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, for Muhammad Bey embraced virtually all the elements of 'Ali Bey's foreign policy, which included the broadening and deepening of contacts with both the Arab and European worlds. A change in the mood or character of the relations between the new regime and the Ottoman central government was immediately apparent, but the drive of the Qazdughli bayt for complete control over Egypt never abated during Muhammad Bey's mashyakhah. A change of tactics, not of goals, was therefore the major result in the transfer of power from 'Ali Bey to his mamluk and brother-in-law.

The successful return of Muhammad Bey from his brief exile in the Sa'id delivered the Ottoman government of a powerful enemy and seemed to signal the end of the Egyptian rebellion. Muhammad Bey rehabilitated many of the Janissary officers whom 'Ali Bey had driven from Cairo, sent letters of submission to the sultan following his triumphant return to the capital, and undertook the traditional obligations to the empire that 'Ali Bey had ceased to perform. In many subtle ways, as well, Muhammad Bey demonstrated his acceptance of Ottoman sovereignty. He quickly retired the new coins that 'Ali Bey had struck with his own name and conspicuously minted coins in the traditional manner. Coins issued by the Cairo mint during Muhammad Bey's mashyakhah bore only the name of the sultan and the date of his accession, being entirely devoid of any mark belonging to Muhammad Bey.¹ He also dispatched his most trusted mamluk, Ibrahim Bey, to

1. Lachman, "The Coins Struck by Ali Bey in Egypt," 137.



lead the pilgrimage to the Hijaz and to deliver the payments in money and rations that Egypt was obliged by law and custom to send to the holy cities. These, too, 'Ali Bey had conspicuously refused to release in the last years of his *mashyakhah*. Muhammad Bey also agreed to forward to the Ottoman government three years of back taxes owed the Imperial Treasury.² Finally, he welcomed the arrival of a new governor, Khalil Pasha, on June 8, 1773 and ceremoniously installed him in the citadel.

The Egyptian revolt begun in 1769 seemed at an end, yet French observers correctly saw that the reemergence of Ottoman authority in Egypt came only with the sufferance of Muhammad Bey, who found it in his interests to rehabilitate Ottoman sovereignty. From Cairo d'Amirat noted that whereas Muhammad Bey received his authority from the sultan, all the projects that seemingly rehabilitated the Ottoman government's position in Egypt were really programs that strengthened his own position. And from Alexandria Boyer reported that Khalil Pasha's entry into Cairo was not brilliant and that firmans continued to be issued in the name of Muhammad Bey.³ It was only on the surface, then, that Ottoman authority had returned to Egypt. Muhammad Bey would receive in collaboration with the empire what 'Ali Bey had gone into rebellion to obtain.

The major fiscal signs of submission were the sending of the pilgrimage to the holy cities with the annual revenues and gifts and the forwarding of the *irsaliyah* to Istanbul. Promising to forward three years of taxes withheld during the last years of 'Ali Bey's *mashyakhah* was one thing, but the transport of so valuable a cargo to Istanbul was another matter entirely. The war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia had disrupted Ottoman and European shipping in the eastern Mediterranean, for a Russian squadron operating in Aegean and Levant waters had virtually driven Ottoman shipping from the seas and had also caused the European merchant houses great losses. The transport of goods between Istanbul and the ports of the Levant and Egypt was therefore highly risky in 1773 as the sea lanes were unsafe because of the Russian actions and the presence of corsairs in the Aegean. Muhammad Bey therefore demanded that the European consuls collectively assume responsibility for the safe transfer of the *irsaliyah* of three years and guarantee its arrival. When the consuls

2. Jabarti, I, 371; PRO, SP 97, Box 48, 98, July 3, 1772; AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 26, 1773; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), August 6, 1773.

3. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 26, 1773; B1, 111 (Alexandrie), August 5, 1773.

successfully declined to assume responsibility for the valuable cargo, an Ottoman transport finally arrived in Alexandria and safely transferred the taxes to Istanbul. French sources noted the arrival of 11,400 purses, a sum representing the taxes of Egypt for three years.⁴

The honorific titles attached to the names of Muhammad Bey and his amirs in his famous waqfiyah take on added significance as another symbolic gesture of submission to the will of the sultan. Not only is the sultan referred to in the document in respectful and exalted language, being called even the *khalifah*,⁵ but Muhammad Bey emphasizes his own dependence upon the sultan by referring to himself as the sultan's mir al-liwa (mir al-liwa al-sharif al-sultani) instead of the more imposing title shaykh al-balad, a title the sultan recognized at the time the document was composed. Throughout his later career, in fact, and even in the documents composed for distribution to the foreigners, Muhammad Bey is generally referred to as the "former qa'immaqam" rather than shaykh al-balad.⁶ In any correspondence with the sultan's government or in official documents he would probably want to emphasize his relationship to the sultan and so would prefer the highest Ottoman title he possessed to that time, that of mir al-liwa or qa'immaqam. These titles implied that the authority or approval of the sultan was behind him, whereas the title shaykh al-balad was an appellation having meaning only for the independent mamluk hierarchy and carried no implications of inherent legal authority.

Muhammad Bey's mamluks are also seen in his waqfiyah as loyal sanjaq beys of the sultan, for Murad, Isma'il and Yusuf are all listed as the sultan's amirs. This choice of terminology appears to consciously emphasize the submission of the new bayt following several years of rebellion. One should not stress the symbolic submission of Muhammad Bey too much, however, for he secured a greater autonomy from the empire and firmer control over the bureaucracy than even 'Ali Bey had been able to achieve. It is more accurate to point out that the seeming rehabilitation of Ottoman authority in Egypt was with Muhammad Bey's sufferance and went only so far as was

4. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), August 6, 1773; AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 158 (1772-1775, supplement), October 4, 1773.

5. MA, *Daftarkhanah*, waqfiyah no. 900, 44. It is possible that this designation reflects the new title for which the Ottoman sultan had won recognition from the Russians in the treaty of Küçük Kainarca in 1774.

6. See, for instance, SCA, al-Bab al-'Ali, 328, 346, 132; al-Bab al-'Ali, 283, 460, 315; al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 250, 460, 228; al-Qism al-'Askariyah, 196, 231, 240. A document in French in which he signs himself "former qa'immaqam" can be found in AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), March 20, 1775.

compatible with his own policies. The shaykh al-balad implemented those requests of the Ottoman government that suited him and disregarded others that he found incompatible with his own ambitions. He could receive a new pasha in the citadel or send the irsaliyah to Istanbul. He might tolerate the appearance of a Russian ship in Alexandria if it bore a capitulatory treaty granting Russian ships the right to enter Ottoman ports,⁷ but he vigorously pursued his own goals whenever possible. Usually he was able to disguise these independent programs by forwarding his own plans in conjunction with those of the sultan. But on occasion he could oppose his sovereign's decrees. He launched his attack against Dahir al-'Umar in Palestine in 1775 despite the pardon that the rebel had secured from the sultan on the eve of the invasion, and he could encourage English trade at Suez despite the sultan's prohibitions against that trade. From the time that he had Khalil Pasha replaced with his client Mustafa Pasha al-Nabulsi, the political momentum of his regime, despite the many symbolic acts of submission to the sultan, carried it inexorably forward toward complete autonomy within the Ottoman Empire.

Muhammad Bey fell heir to 'Ali Bey's scheme to encourage the European trading houses, particularly the British East India Company, to revive the Red Sea route to Suez and across Lower Egypt to Cairo and Egypt's Mediterranean entrepôts. So insignificant was English trade in Egypt at this time that the English did not even have a consul in that country, the profits of their northern Syrian trade being sufficient for them.⁸ The political insecurities in Egypt and the rapacity of local tyrants in Mocha and Jidda had caused serious losses in previous decades to merchants on both ends of that trade route. A report from Mocha in 1771, for instance, complained that the Company's trade in that port had fallen off and that merchants in India had been ruined by losses to the Company suffered at Mocha. Similar problems faced the merchants at Jidda, the northernmost port open to Europeans in the Red Sea.⁹ Ottoman unwillingness to countenance European shipping north of Jidda, illegally imposed customs duties that often amounted to double the legal rate, and political instability in Egypt had forced the European trading houses to virtually abandon the

7. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), February 20, 1775.

8. PRO, SP 110, Box 42, 251. In a letter of August 17, 1773, it is explained that English goods are selling well in Syria, so there is no need to send these goods to Cairo.

9. India Office (London), Factory Records, G/17/3, Egypt and the Red Sea, April 8, 1771; G/17/5, November 4, 1776.

Red Sea route in preference for the longer but safer passage around Africa. That is not to say, however, that Egypt did not derive benefits from the commerce of the Red Sea, for a lively trade, particularly with Yemen, was carried on through Suez by Muslim and indigenous Christian merchants.

Muhammad Bey had obtained firsthand knowledge of these problems facing European trade and had developed an appreciation of the benefits to be derived from an increased flow of European commerce in the Red Sea when he conquered the Hijaz for 'Ali Bey in 1770. When, therefore, in 1773 the English explorer James Bruce passed through Cairo after explorations on the Upper Nile, Muhammad Bey received him courteously and listened intently to his plans for receiving English ships from India in the port of Suez. The result of their conversations was a trade agreement that was highly advantageous to British merchants wishing to establish direct links between India and Egypt. Bruce, who had the authority to act as agent of his King, dispatched letters to India informing the East India Company of the welcome its ships would receive in Suez and submitted his agreement to his own government for approval. To the India Company he wrote, "I have seen your trade to Jidda, and it is a ruinous one, and the sherrife, now poor and hungry will every day rob you more and more."¹⁰ Instead of the 14 percent duty and large bakhshish the English merchants then paid at Jidda, Bruce secured from Muhammad Bey a firman granting English merchants the right to transfer their goods at Suez for an 8 percent duty. Muhammad Bey also promised to forego any bakhshish, but in return demanded the right to purchase whatever the British brought to Egypt, hoping thereby to establish his own personal monopoly of the English goods of India.¹¹ There is some irony to the fact that this agreement was signed just before the battle against 'Ali Bey at al-Salihiyah, for Muhammad Bey rallied his forces against his adversary by criticizing 'Ali Bey for permitting the Christians to expand their influence in Egypt.

Efforts to reestablish British trade with Egypt are not associated so much with the name of James Bruce as they are with that of George Baldwin, a British merchant who worked singlehandedly for almost

10. Bruce, IV, 637.

11. Ibid., 632. Pages 635 ff. contain correspondence pertaining to this trade. See also PRO, SP 97, Box 49, 199, December 17, 1773, for an Italian translation of Muhammad Bey's orders to permit ships of the Company to come to Suez.

three decades to bring the British trade of India through Egypt.¹² Muhammad Bey was equally receptive to Baldwin, who appeared in Cairo just before the second Syrian campaign in 1775, and told him that "If you bring the India ships to Suez, I will lay an aqueduct from the Nile to Suez, and you shall drink of the Nile water."¹³

The enthusiasm of Bruce and Baldwin for the revival of the English trade was met with equal anticipation in India, where the East India Company was eager to exploit the new opening provided by the two men. Problems in the ports of Mocha and Jidda had made further development of British trade in the Red Sea difficult, so the Company was anxious to by-pass those two ports and unload its cargoes directly at Suez. Two ships of the Company, one loaded with the goods of India and the other carrying Company officials, reached Suez in January, 1775. Seeing the shaykh al-balad truly eager to encourage English trade at Suez, Warren Hastings, president and governor for the affairs of the British in Bengal, signed a formal treaty of navigation and commerce with Muhammad Bey in March, 1775 that was in most ways similar to the earlier agreement signed with Bruce. Once again Muhammad Bey made significant concessions to entice the British to Suez. Among the important articles of the treaty were the following.

Article II attempted to make the treaty binding on Muhammad Bey's successors, promised free passage for the signatories, by land or sea, through each other's territories without a passport, and gave each party six months to disengage and leave freely with its goods should political troubles emerge between them. Article V promised that no one would be illegally seized or detained. Article IX set the customs duties of all goods from Bengal and Madras at 6.5 percent. Goods from Surat or Bombay would pay 8 percent. Article XI established Cairo as the only market for the sale of Indian goods in Egypt, Muhammad Bey assuming full liability for the transfer of the Indian goods from Suez to Cairo. Article XIII permitted customs duties to be paid after the goods were sold. Article XIV stipulated that no presents

12. For information on Baldwin's experience in Egypt and records relating to the British attempt to develop their trade at Suez see Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*; India Office, Factory Records (London), G/17/3, G/17/5, and G/17/5A; PRO, FO 24, Box 1; The British Museum, MS. 29210, ff. 341-342; Kimche, "The Opening of the Red Sea"; François Charles-Roux, "France, Egypte et Mer Rouge, de 1715 a 1798," *Cahiers d'Histoire Égyptienne*, 3 (January, 1951); and idem, *Autour d'une Route. L'Angleterre, l'Isthme de Suez et l'Égypte au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: 1922).

13. Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, 4.

should be given the Bey or his ministers and stated that no illegal exactions would be levied by either party.¹⁴

Despite the efforts made by Bruce and Baldwin to open the port of Suez to the British and notwithstanding the eagerness of both Muhammad Bey and the East India Company for the development of this trade relationship, the Red Sea would remain an unprofitable area for the Europeans for several more decades. Political opposition to the appearance of East India Company ships at Suez arose in both Istanbul and London, but for entirely different reasons. The Ottoman government made strenuous objections to the dramatic appearance of British ships at Suez and in a series of representations to the British ambassador at Istanbul and in firmans sent to Cairo and Mecca reiterated its traditional prohibition against Christian shipping north of Jidda.¹⁵ The Ottomans understood full well the fate of the Muslim states of India that had been conquered by the Europeans after trade relations had been established. Following the appearance of six more British ships at Suez in 1776, the Ottoman Government made another protestation to the English government, arguing that "The British carried on a Trade contrary to custom up to the Port of Suez, with a view to make a conquest of the Country."¹⁶

So interested was the East India Company in reversing its losses in the Red Sea that it even considered ignoring Ottoman prohibitions against European trade north of Jidda and paying off the sharif of Mecca for losses he might suffer by the transfer of British trade from Jidda to Suez.¹⁷ For his part, Baldwin did everything he could to obtain the approval of his government for his plans. In a secret memorial entitled "Speculation on the Situation and Resources of Egypt," Baldwin wrote of Egypt, "She is the Magazine of all the trade of Yemen, the mart of all the coffee and rich gums of Yemen, the entrepot of all the interior parts of Africa, producing gums, gold dust, ivory, senna and drugs." One also finds a statement in the memorial that in its assumptions, hopes, and fears characterizes perfectly the worldwide struggle then going on between the British and French em-

14. An English copy of the treaty can be found in India Office, Factory Records, G/17/5A. A French translation can be found in AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), 1772-1775.

15. PRO, SP 97, Box 52, 1-2, January 3, 1776. Baldwin, *Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, 8-19, and India Office, Factory Records, G/17/5, translate a *khatt sharif* (noble rescript) of 1778 prohibiting ships of the East India Company from using any ports in the Red Sea except Mocha and Jidda.

16. PRO, FO 24, Box 1, 9.

17. British Museum, MS. 29210, ff. 341-342.

pires. "France in possession of Egypt," wrote Baldwin, "Would possess the Master Key to all the trading Nations of the Earth."¹⁸

The British government was itself in a quandary as to how to react to the new situation developing in Egypt and the Red Sea. It looked with obvious sympathy on the desires of British merchants to develop the route through Egypt, but had to weigh the economic benefits against the obvious political liabilities of so bold a venture. It was also suspicious of Baldwin's participation in the plans, for he stood to derive considerable financial benefit from the proposed scheme. Ultimately, the government was caught in an embarrassing predicament. It could not permit the East India Company to intrude into the eastern Mediterranean because the Levant Company had a monopoly there, nor did it want to abandon its friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire, which at that time was of strategic and military importance to England in its attempts to balance the powers of France and Russia on the European continent. British policy was already working to maintain the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire against Hapsburg and Russian ambitions. Whereas it was felt in London that the Russians would use the appearance of British merchants at Suez as a pretext for annexing Ottoman territory in Europe, the British government suppressed its own natural commercial instincts in this case. In consideration of its broad strategic interests the home government therefore rejected the treaties signed by Bruce and Hastings and forbade the East India Company to carry its trade to Suez, although it did give permission for the Company to pass correspondence and messengers through Egypt.¹⁹

While the British government was itself prohibiting its merchants from using the port of Suez, Baldwin was urging it to make strenuous representations in Istanbul defending the *right* of British merchants to trade at that port if they wished. He argued that because the capitulations extended to the French in 1763 gave to the merchants of that nation the right to send their vessels and goods directly to Suez, where the Venetians had similar rights, the British ambassador to the Ottoman government should declare that English capitulatory rights gave to English merchants the same privileges as those enjoyed by any other nation in the Ottoman Empire.²⁰ It was not just protestations from Istanbul or London that stopped the East India Company from

18. India Office, Factory Records, G/17/5, 2 and 21 of the memorial.

19. Ibid., 83, Instructions from London to Bengal, July 4, 1777.

20. PRO, FO 24, Box 1, 10.

following up its initial opening in Suez, but the hazards of sailing in the Red Sea and the rapacity of Muhammad Bey's successors. Baldwin's labors to develop British trade at Suez met with a terrible setback, and he himself suffered a heavy financial loss in 1779 when four British ships that entered the harbor of Suez were plundered by the beys.²¹

The growing tyranny of the Qazdughli regime made any further European attempts to develop the trade of Egypt highly improbable. Because of the illegal exactions placed upon them by the Qazdughli amirs and the physical attacks made upon them by soldiers and citizens alike, several French merchants abandoned the capital and the French consulate was moved to Alexandria in 1777. Despite these experiences, interest in the new route continued to stir European imaginations. In October, 1785, Murad Bey signed a commercial treaty with the French in which he invited their merchants to use the port of Suez.²² Then in 1786 Baldwin was appointed official agent of the East India Company in Cairo, although he was ordered to avoid engaging in trade and was instructed to confine himself to passing correspondence and messengers between England and India.²³

Several points are significant in reviewing this early attempt to open the Red Sea port of Suez to European shipping. First, Muhammad Bey was continuing the policy of 'Ali Bey by inviting Christian ships to Suez. He was, moreover, disregarding entirely the firmans of the sultan forbidding this trade. Although he died unexpectedly in 1775 and the schemes to develop the trade of Suez would be delayed until the nineteenth century, it is significant to note that Muhammad Bey pursued programs that were to be adopted by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha decades later. Muhammad Bey not only sought to increase his customs revenues by encouraging the English to trade at Suez, he also hoped to gain a monopoly over the sale of the Indian goods in Cairo. Herein lies another striking similarity with his more famous successor.

French commercial establishments had been dominant over those of the other European nations in Egypt throughout the eighteenth century. Although the decade of the sixties had caused the French serious losses they still maintained nine *maisons* (commercial establishments) in Cairo, three in Rosetta, and four in Alexandria in 1769.²⁴ The French continued to dominate the European trade of

21. PRO, SP 110, Box 74.

22. An extract of the treaty appears in India Office, Factory Records, G/17/5.

23. Ibid., G/17/5A, June 1, 1786.

24. AN, B1, 110 (Alexandrie), June 16, 1768. Four nations were represented by

Egypt, but 'Ali Bey's continuous exactions against them, greater than those of his predecessors, had undermined the financial stability of their maisons and driven them considerably into debt by the end of the sixties. The continued lawlessness of that period, during which French merchants were even subject to illegal seizure and ransom and their maisons to physical attack, caused them to consider closing their establishments in Cairo as early as 1769.

The mashyakhah of Muhammad Bey from 1772 to 1775 appears a brief period of tranquillity surrounded by the conscious lawlessness of the mashyakhahs of 'Ali Bey and the duumvirs Ibrahim and Murad Beys. For the three years he ruled supreme in Egypt Muhammad Bey dealt firmly, but with justice, with the French, paid careful attention to their complaints, gave them satisfaction in matters relating to their trade, and permitted them to rehabilitate their commerce in Egypt. He went out of his way to accomodate the French and to establish friendly relations with them during the first half of his mashyakhah. Several incidents, all seemingly related to the threat that 'Ali Bey and Dahir al-'Umar posed to his regime, indicated to the French that their merchants would receive the protection and support of the new mamluk ruler in Cairo. But the same protection would not be extended to the Catholic missions in Egypt and Palestine.

The French ambassador Priest reported from his post in Istanbul in February, 1773, that an emissary of Muhammad Bey had asked him to use his good offices on his behalf with the Ottoman government. In return the bey promised justice to the French merchants in Egypt.²⁵ This advance to the French apparently succeeded, for they quietly took his side in the continuing struggle with 'Ali Bey, who remained a threat in his Palestinian exile. Indeed, a letter sent for d'Amirat in Cairo implying that he should help the Ottoman authorities resist 'Ali Bey was intercepted on the eve of 'Ali Bey's unsuccessful return to Cairo and caused d'Amirat much difficulty.²⁶ For his part, Muhammad Bey redeemed his promise to the French ambassador by giving satisfaction to the French merchants resident in Egypt.

The first incident requiring the attention of Muhammad Bey was the shipwreck at Burullus of a French ship coming from Algiers with a cargo of specie. Both the cargo and the crew were seized by local

consuls in Cairo in 1768. They were France, Venice, Holland, and Ragusa (*ibid.*, October 22, 1768).

25. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 159, February 3, 1773.

26. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), June 28, 1773.

inhabitants, whereupon Boyer and d'Amirat sought the intervention of Muhammad Bey. The French reported with satisfaction that Muhammad Bey sent an official to Burullus who delivered severe justice to the despoilers of the shipwreck.²⁷ Now the French pressed for other concessions from the shaykh al-balad. Both the old and the new ports of Alexandria were somewhat hazardous, not affording sufficient protection from the often violent sea. Europeans were barred from the old port, which was reserved for Muslim shipping, and had to drop anchor in the new port, which was more exposed to the sea than the old port. Ships were frequently destroyed when caught by storms in the new port. During one particularly bad storm, forty-two ships were lost. In 1769 eight were lost, and in 1773 another ten were lost. At first Muhammad Bey promised to make improvements to the new port to afford better protection and facilities to the Europeans, but the French pressed for and ultimately received the considerable concession of using the old port.²⁸

The French maisons responded favorably to the concessions made by Muhammad Bey. Reports from Alexandria and Cairo in 1774 remarked on the tranquillity of the affairs of the community and commended Muhammad Bey for the satisfaction he gave French merchants in their affairs in Egypt. The French were even informally invited to send their ships to Suez, where the English already had a formal welcome, but they were in no position to take advantage of this opening.²⁹

While French trade continued to increase in Egypt and the overall relations between the nation and Muhammad Bey remained friendly, two areas of conflict disturbed the otherwise harmonious relations between the two parties. The first was the vexatious tradition of the *avanie*, or forced payment; the second involved French captains carrying on a prohibited trade between Damietta and the ports of the Levant coast.

When Muhammad Bey drove 'Ali Bey from Egypt in 1772, acts

27. AN, B1, 970 (Rosette), April 10 and April 27, 1773; B111, 91 (Chambre du Commerce de Marseille), May 14, 1773.

28. Masson, *Histoire du commerce francais*, II, 602-603; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), October 7, 1773; B1, 335 (Le Caire), March 30, 1774 and December 11, 1774. He later afforded the same right to the Russians, who had nevertheless secured a capitulatory document from Istanbul granting them that privilege (B1, 335 [Le Caire], February 20, 1775).

29. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), March 30, 1774, and February 20, 1775; B1, 111 (Alexandrie), September 6, 1774.

against Christians became more threatening. Again before the battle of al-Salihyah the Christian community had suffered attacks upon its residences and establishments. The French thought it was absolutely necessary, therefore, to give sizable payments to the new ruler and his most powerful ministers if their establishments were to survive in Egypt.³⁰ Despite the good relations he desired with the French and the encouragement he gave to their commerce, Muhammad Bey could not abandon a practice that was so much a part of the governing system, but was so reprehensible to the foreign and minority communities. He could see nothing inherently wrong with the practice and did not comprehend the incongruity of at once encouraging French trade in his vilayet and imposing ever larger *avannies* on the merchants responsible for developing that commerce. The series of exactions Muhammad Bey levied upon the French was discussed in chapter four. Though bothersome, these extortions were not of the magnitude extracted by 'Ali Bey, nor were they viewed by the French with as much consternation as those of the previous shaykh al-balad.

The other problem facing French commerce was the matter of French trade between Egypt and the Levant coast. Muhammad Bey had laid an embargo upon the ports of the Levant as a way of denying supplies and food to 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar, but many French captains ignored the ban in search of the lucrative profits the contraband trade would bring. This illicit commerce threatened all French trade in Egypt and created numerous problems for French officials in Cairo and Alexandria. Dozens of French ships came and went from the Nile port of Damietta without coming under the supervision of French officials who resided in Alexandria, Cairo, or Rosetta. After leaving port many of them simply headed for Acre where their cargoes would bring a good price. For the independent French captains it was business as usual, but Muhammad Bey saw this trade as strengthening his enemies at the time they were planning to invade Lower Egypt. Throughout his *mashyakhah* he was embroiled in disputes with the French over this trade. In March, 1773, for instance, he issued orders for the arrest of a French captain who had been known to transport a cargo of rice from Damietta to Acre. He was furious that the French should continue this commerce and ordered them to send their interpreter, Venture de Paradis, to Damietta with the rank of vice-consul so that he might put an end to this trade.³¹ There was

30. AN, B1, 970 (Rosette), September 24, 1773.

31. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 1, 1773.

really little the French officials could do to enforce Muhammad Bey's ban on this trade once the French ships cleared the harbor, but so threatening were the activities of these captains to the normal affairs of their community in Egypt that the Chamber of Commerce of Marseille made efforts to discover and discipline those captains who engaged in the prohibited trade.³² Finally, in the spring of 1775 as he was preparing the second invasion of Syria Muhammad Bey threatened the French with the confiscation of their goods if they continued the illegal trade and ordered their officials to redouble their efforts to stop the flow of goods from Damietta to Levant ports.³³

Despite these problems arising from the *avaries* and the unauthorized trade with the Levant, the French were well satisfied with both the state of their overall relations with Muhammad Bey and with the volume of their commerce with Egypt. In a memoir from the French government to Mure, the new French consul general in Cairo, the government noted with satisfaction that the community had re-established its commerce and that its affairs in Egypt were tranquil.³⁴ The French merchants had fared better under Muhammad Bey than they had under 'Ali Bey or would under the *duumvirs* Ibrahim and Murad, but Muhammad Bey's *mashyakhah* was too short for them to recover the losses suffered at the hands of 'Ali Bey. In April, 1775, Mure noted that the French account in Cairo was still in debt and at the same time announced that the community had had to give another 7,200 pataques to the *shaykh al-balad*.³⁵

As mentioned in chapter three, Muhammad Bey maintained constant contacts with affairs in Palestine between the time 'Ali Bey took refuge there in the spring of 1772 and the opening of his invasion in the spring of 1775. Following his expulsion of 'Ali Bey in April, 1772, he sent ships loaded with munitions and provisions to the besieged city of Jaffa and was rumored ready to send a large army against 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir. Meanwhile, he imposed the embargo on shipping to the Levant ports under the control of his enemies. The fall of Jaffa to 'Ali Bey and Shaykh Dahir in early 1773 certainly delayed any plans that Muhammad Bey might have had for

32. AN, B111, 91 (Chambre du Commerce de Marseille), July 19, 1773.

33. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), copy of a letter in French written by Muhammad Bey to the Consul General of France, March 13, 1775.

34. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), September 6, 1774. Clement, *Les Français d'Egypte*, 221-23, also concludes that the French merchant community fared well under Muhammad Bey.

35. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 24, 1775.

an attack upon his enemies that year. But the need to attack was removed when 'Ali Bey died in his futile attempt to regain the mashyakhah in the spring of 1773.

Although the actual invasion of Syria would be delayed almost two years, Muhammad Bey's activities in the interval demonstrated his continued interest in the affairs of Palestine and the activities of Shaykh Dahir. In the fall of 1773 Muhammad Bey called upon the shaykh to return the effects of the deceased 'Ali Bey, particularly the vast treasure he was supposed to have had with him in exile, and demanded that he evacuate Nablus, Ghazza, Ramla, and Jaffa, which the sultan had assigned to him in 1771, but whose revenues he was never able to collect.³⁶ At the same time he apparently petitioned the sultan for a reaffirmation of the formal right to administer these iltizams which had been assigned to him years earlier.³⁷ The very strong rumor that Rizq had escaped from Damietta at the time of 'Ali Bey's flight with a sum said to be as much as 20,000 purses persisted throughout this period. Indeed, during his campaign of 1775 Muhammad Bey showed a single-minded purposefulness in retrieving this alleged sum. A French report even suggested that Muhammad Bey's invasion was prompted by Dahir's refusal to return the alleged treasure to Egypt, but this could certainly not be an important reason for the attack.³⁸

While Shaykh Dahir remained in control of the disputed region, refusing either to return 'Ali Bey's possessions or to hand over the revenues and administration of those southern Palestinian districts, Muhammad Bey began to make preparations for a campaign against him. The French noted in early 1774 that he levied a tax of 300 pataques on every village in Egypt to pay for the proposed war against Dahir. Preparations for the invasion of Syria continued throughout the year and in January, 1775, two of Dahir's ships were seized in Damietta while transports to carry artillery, munitions, and infantry were being assembled in that port.³⁹

The proposed war against Dahir obviously had the consent of the Ottoman government, for the French ambassador reported from Istanbul that the sultan was obliged to assign Muhammad Bey the

36. AN, B1, 1036 (Seyde), August 31, 1773.

37. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, January 4, 1775. Cohen, (*Palestine in the 18th Century*, 49), cites Ottoman documents that assigned Ghazza and Ramla to Muhammad Bey as iltizams in 1185/1771-72.

38. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, April 3, 1775.

39. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 20, 1774, and January 28, 1775.

requested iltizams of Ghazza, Ramla, and Jaffa and that two Ottoman caravels had been placed at his disposition for the coming struggle with Dahir. As the campaign unfolded the Druze amir and other shaykhs of the mountains in neighboring districts were issued firmans from Istanbul instructing them to give aid to the Egyptian forces in their struggle against Shaykh Dahir.⁴⁰

Convinced that Muhammad Bey would eventually return to Syria, Shaykh Dahir had been maneuvering to head off the invasion by making his peace with the sultan. As early as February, 1774, he had agreed with 'Uthman Pasha of Damascus to receive the province of Sidon in return for evacuating southern Palestine and paying the taxes he had failed to forward to Istanbul, but the Ottoman government in Istanbul never confirmed this agreement.⁴¹ Again, in the fall of 1774, Dahir proposed to submit to the sultan and pay the miri if he would be confirmed in the iltizams he then held.⁴² As the pressure of the impending invasion mounted on Dahir and the Ottoman authorities, who themselves could not look with much pleasure upon the appearance of Muhammad Bey in Syria at the head of a powerful mamluk army, the Ottoman government and Dahir made their peace. In April, 1775, when the long awaited invasion was still in its early stages, an emissary of the Ottoman government arrived in Sidon with a pardon for Shaykh Dahir. It was also reported that the Ottoman government sent a message to Muhammad Bey, then besieging Jaffa, that he was assigned the revenues of the territories Shaykh Dahir previously held between Sidon and Ghazza and for which he had petitioned, and that he was instructed to cease his advance into Syria.⁴³ By this time, however, Muhammad Bey's long planned invasion was unfolding and he was unwilling to halt his attack short of achieving his objectives. He therefore ignored the sultan's instructions and continued the siege of Jaffa and supportive operations along the coast to the north.

In mid-March, 1775, Muhammad Bey was once more at 'Adliyah making preparations for an invasion of Syria. Assembled with him

40. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, January 4 and April 3, 1775. Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 49.

41. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, pp. 303-304. 'Uthman Pasha, too, wanted to avoid an invasion by the mamluk army of Egypt and so was eager to make peace with Dahir. See also Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 47.

42. Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 303-304; Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 47-48.

43. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), May 5, 1775; B1, 1037 (Seyde), April 7, 1775.

were the high dignitaries of the state, including the governor, Mustafa Pasha, and the leading amirs of his bayt. Murad Bey, though, was the only mamluk of importance to accompany his master on campaign, for Isma'il Bey and Ibrahim Bey remained behind, the latter assuming the executive functions of his master while he was on campaign.⁴⁴ The troops were paid in advance and, as was the custom, left in staggered groups one day apart. An advance group composed of the houses of several beys left 'Adliyah on the 16th of March. Murad led the second group toward Palestine on the 17th and Muhammad Bey departed with the third force on the 18th.⁴⁵ Meanwhile a naval force of twenty-five to thirty ships took on supplies, artillery, and infantry at Damietta.⁴⁶ Included among the cannons loaded on shipboard was a massive one cast in Egypt the previous year, probably the work of the Englishman Robinson, which was nicknamed Abu Maqalah.⁴⁷

Ghazza capitulated to the Egyptian forces on April 1 and Ramla quickly followed suit.⁴⁸ On April 3 Muhammad Bey stood before the walls of Jaffa, which chose to resist. Muhammad Bey is said to have called upon the city three times to surrender, but Yusuf Sabbagh, who commanded the city, refused to open the gates or to even let frightened citizens flee to the safety of the countryside. The monks of Terre Sainte begged him ten times to let them flee to Acre, but he only levied a fine of 40 purses upon them as reply. Apparently Muhammad Bey's cannons, which had arrived from Damietta, were of little effect in the siege, for the city withstood the Egyptians until May 29, when a breach was finally made in the walls by the explosion of mines set by one of the Englishmen Muhammad Bey had with him.⁴⁹

The punishment of the citizens of Jaffa for their defiance would serve as an example to the inhabitants of other towns along the line of

44. Jabarti, I, 413; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 305.

45. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), March 20, 1775. Jabarti (I, 413) notes they left Cairo in early March.

46. Intelligence supplied by a French naval captain (AN, B1, 1122 [Tripoli de Syrie], April 28, 1775).

47. Jabarti, I, 413.

48. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), April 24, 1775; Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus*, 305. Muradi's account of Muhammad Bey's second Syrian campaign is very cursory. French and English consular records present the best review of the events at Jaffa and Acre of the next few days.

49. AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), June 4 and July 8, 1775; PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79 ff. contains letters written in Italian by the Franciscans of Acre to their coreligionists in Aleppo. The first letter referring to the events at Jaffa is dated June 16, 1775. If we are to believe Volney, who visited the city years later, the shaykh al-balad first bivouacked his army so close to the city that cannon shots from the defenders fell

march, so Muhammad Bey permitted a general massacre of the population and pillage of the city. It is an immemorial custom in warfare, even in the West, to grant mercy to those who capitulate and to punish, often in a most cruel manner, those who resist and lose. Jabarti remarks that the massacre of the inhabitants was indiscriminate, claiming sharif and alim as well as Christian and Jew.⁵⁰ The heads of five hundred victims were mounted on hillocks outside the walls and turned away from the city as a stern warning of the fate that awaited those who dared to resist the Egyptian advance. Women and children, and other fortunate men, were spared, but taken as booty. Among the fallen were two Ragusan priests of Terre Sainte who had sought to give refuge to the sons of Ibrahim Sabbagh, Shaykh Dahir's customs agent.⁵¹

It was at Jaffa that Muhammad Bey began a systematic destruction of Christian religious structures in Palestine. He pulled down the hospice of Terre Sainte so that stone did not stand upon stone and confiscated 200 crates of statuary sent to the priests as a gift of the king of Spain.⁵² He made subsequent attacks upon various Christian religious establishments along his line of march. The friars must have felt that the grim reaper had come to collect a harvest of Christian monks, for they were threatened with ruination or destruction by Muhammad Bey, whose actions seemed aimed at wiping Palestine clean of their presence. At Nazareth, for instance, he first met the monks with cordiality, but later sent emissaries to demand the staggering sum of 700 purses from them. They were only saved by Muhammad Bey's unexpected death and the sudden withdrawal of the Egyptian forces.⁵³

into his camp, whereupon he had to withdraw a greater distance from the walls. Volney also asserts that Muhammad Bey first positioned his cannons so close to the walls that his artillerymen were picked off by musket fire from the defenders (I, 146-147). No contemporary source, however, makes these assertions.

50. Jabarti, I, 413. The memory of the severed heads lived for decades in the area, though the massacre took on exaggerated proportions with the passage of time. Baron de Tott (IV, 112), wrote only a few years later that 1,500 heads were displayed outside the city walls. It is curious that Muhammad Bey has taken so much criticism for the massacre of the inhabitants of Jaffa, for it was a common practice in the area throughout recorded history. Napoleon, too, massacred the defenders of the city two and a half decades later, yet has little shame attached to that act. Of course he did not display the heads of the fallen in the manner of his predecessor.

51. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 6, 1775; PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79, letter of the Franciscan head at Acre to his coreligionists in Aleppo.

52. AN, B1, 335 (Le Caire), June 5, 1775.

53. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 80, letter of the Franciscan head at Acre.

The massacre of the inhabitants of Jaffa had its desired effect upon his enemies, who now abandoned the cities along his march. Beirut and Sidon capitulated to his naval forces and Dahir, weakened by the desertion of his son 'Ali and sensing the irresistible nature of Muhammad Bey's coming attack, fled his capital of Acre on May 24 to find refuge in the mountains. Acre capitulated to a small naval force that came from Haifa on May 30, but since there were not enough troops to maintain order the city collapsed into chaos. The Latin church was pillaged on the first day of the occupation. Later the Maghribi troops entered the city and pillaged everything that was not locked tight. The city was sacked five times and the churches desecrated on numerous occasions before Muhammad Bey arrived by sea with his main force. A strange fury seemed to animate Muhammad Bey at Acre, for he demonstrated a viciousness that was not evident in his career up to that point. He was noticeably displeased with the gifts given him by the leaders of the French community in their first audience with him and demanded that they produce the treasures of 'Ali Bey, Shaykh Dahir, and Ibrahim Sabbagh, Dahir's first secretary and customs agent, which he insisted they were hiding. Along with two of his beys he personally toured the pillaged city, looking in various of Sabbagh's shops and warehouses for the alleged treasures.⁵⁴ Rumors of the existence of some vast hidden sums were rampant at the time. Even the English consular correspondence mentions a sum of 50,000 which Shaykh Dahir was said to have entrusted to the care of the French merchants of Acre.⁵⁵ Muhammad Bey certainly gave every indication that he believed the treasures he sought were hidden somewhere in the city, for he ordered that palaces and fortified places within the city be torn down.⁵⁶

As his frustration at not finding the treasures mounted, so did his displeasure with the foreigners increase. Despite the arrival of a firman from Istanbul granting protection to the Carmelite priests Muhammad Bey sent soldiers to pull down their convent on Mt. Carmel.⁵⁷ Approximately 500 frightened foreigners assembled in the French khan were convinced that Muhammad Bey was going to pillage and massacre them on June 11, but on the evening of June 10 the incredible news of his death spread utter confusion through his army,

54. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79, letter of the Franciscan head at Acre; AN, B1, 1037 (Seyde), June 5 and June 25, 1775.

55. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 94, October 17, 1775.

56. AN, B1, 1037 (Seyde), review of events 20 May to 15 June, 1775.

57. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79, letter of the Franciscan head at Acre.

which, except for the Maghribi troops, evacuated the city on the morning of the 11th. On the 12th Dahir al-'Umar reentered the city and reestablished order. He got the Maghribi troops to depart on the 14th and as a gesture of kindness to the Carmelite fathers sent fifteen masons and thirty workers to repair their damaged convent at his own expense.⁵⁸

During the brief period when all the major cities of the southern Levant coast were in his control Muhammad Bey assembled an authority not enjoyed by any other Egyptian mamluk in two and a half centuries. It was at Acre that he allegedly received the satisfying news that he had gained an unprecedented authority in Egypt and that his conquests in Palestine had been recognized by the sultan. According to European diplomatic sources in Istanbul, the new sultan 'Abd al-Hamid I conferred on Muhammad Bey the rank of vizir with three tails and appointed him governor of Egypt. But astute observers remarked that the shaykh al-balad would decline that honor, for it was seen to be a trap set for him by the Ottoman government. If he accepted the rank of governor or vizir he would be eligible for regular rotation to another post the following year.⁵⁹ Certainly he would not want to accept such conditions or leave Egypt.

58. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 80, letter of Guiseppe Blanc.

59. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 62, July 3, 1775; AN, B1, 442 (Constantinople), June 3, 1775; AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, July 3, 1775. Baldwin (*Political Recollections Relative to Egypt*, 172) also asserts that Muhammad Bey had been named pasha of Egypt as well as shaykh al-balad and remarks on the uniqueness of that situation. Jabarti, on the other hand, claims that Muhammad Bey sent his katkhuda, the controversial Isma'il Agha, to Istanbul with magnificent presents for the sultan and a request that he be granted the government of Egypt and Syria. He alleges that the firman of investiture, the robe of honor, and the insignia of office reached Muhammad Bey in Acre three days before his death, but that is clearly in error as consular reports make no mention of the arrival of such honors. In writing the obituary of Isma'il Agha Jabarti corrects his own mistake by noting that while the firman of investiture had been prepared, the news of Muhammad Bey's death reached Istanbul before Isma'il Agha's departure. The firman was then withdrawn and Isma'il Agha sailed directly to Egypt. Consular records claim that Muhammad Bey's campaign against Dahir had the prior approval of the Ottoman government and that Muhammad Bey had been assigned the revenues of the area between Sidon and Ghazza. These details were apparently confirmed in the firman that was withdrawn. The news of its preparation, rather than the document itself and other honors, probably reached Muhammad Bey in Acre and it is the government of the Palestinian coast, not all of Syria, to which Jabarti refers. See Jabarti, I, 413-414, and II, 20; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), May 5, 1775; AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, January 4, 1775. Cohen (*Palestine in the 18th Century*, 49) mistakenly refers to Muhammad Bey as the governor of Egypt.

In combining the authority of shaykh al-balad with that of governor of Egypt Muhammad Bey achieved a control over the fiscal, bureaucratic, and military structures of Egypt that no mamluk had enjoyed since the Ottoman conquest of 1517. He had successfully attached southern Syria to the beylicate of Egypt and was on the verge of establishing a powerful autonomous mamluk state within the heart of the decaying Ottoman Empire when death cheated him of his accomplishments and sent the Egyptian army, which had been in a similar position in 1771, reeling once more back to Egypt.

There can be little doubt that Muhammad Bey was about to establish an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire, for he gave clear indications on his Syrian campaign of 1775 that he would no longer be constrained by considerations of his legal relation with the empire and the sultan. While he apparently had approval for the war against Shaykh Dahir an Ottoman naval force cruised off the Levant coast, more to observe and constrain the Egyptians than to aid them. 'Uthman Pasha of Damascus also nervously watched the methodical advance of the mamluk forces, wondering if they would stop at Sidon or turn inland toward Damascus.

Mention has already been made of the pardon that the Ottoman government gave to Dahir and the order for Muhammad Bey to halt his advance. It has also been shown that the sultan's firmans granting his protection to the various Christian religious orders in Palestine were totally disregarded by Muhammad Bey, who proceeded to tear down the Christian edifices along his line of march. If we can believe Jabarti, Muhammad Bey had determined to press his campaign deeper into Syria, probably against Damascus, just before his sudden illness and death. Such a drive was definitely beyond the provinces assigned him by the sultan.

Jabarti reports a meeting of Muhammad Bey with his amirs that had striking similarities with the momentous session held by the beys after their conquest of Damascus in 1771. Just as they had felt at Damascus, the beys believed that their campaign was over with the conquest of their immediate objectives and expressed a desire to return to their homes and wives in Egypt. But Muhammad Bey now informed them that they were to remain in place, govern the conquered provinces, and prepare for further conquests deeper into Syria.⁶⁰ Murad Bey himself was appointed governor of the key city of Acre and

60. Jabarti, I, 414.

its surrounding territory.⁶¹ The beys, says Jabarti, left the council chagrined and agitated and returned to their tents to reflect upon their situation.⁶²

About the 8th of June a strange paralysis began to spread through the mamluk camp, for Muhammad Bey did not come out of his tent to speak with the beys. The camp was thrown into confusion for three days by the unverified rumors of the illness of their commander. None but the most intimate of his retinue were permitted to enter his tent and all queries from his lieutenants brought the answer, "The amir is indisposed."⁶³ He died suddenly of a fever at 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 10, 1775, but his intimates were able to keep his death secret until 9 p.m. that evening, when a general agitation among his treasurers, who began to quarrel openly over his possessions, signaled to the camp that Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab had passed away during the day.⁶⁴ Virtually all sources agree that he died of a fever that was rampant in his camp, but one will nevertheless still find the expected mention of poison administered either by an Ottoman agent or a disgruntled mamluk.⁶⁵ The suddenness of his death in Acre is as stupefying as his unexpected withdrawal from Damascus in 1771. On both occasions he had already achieved the victory when fate, or destiny, seemed to intervene. Southern Syria, which had fallen to him twice in four years, was saved on both occasions by unexpected, virtually inexplicable, events that drove the conquering mamluk armies back to Egypt with the utmost speed.

Consular reports note that the Egyptians withdrew pell mell from their conquests following the death of their leader. The morning of

61. AN, B1, 1037 (Seyde), review of the events of May 20 to June 15, 1775.

62. Jabarti, I, 414.

63. Ibid.

64. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79-80. Both the letters of the head of the Franciscans in Acre and Guiseppe Blanc agree on these facts. Jabarti (I, 414) gives the date of death as 8 Rabi' al-Thani, 1189, and thought the news of Muhammad Bey's death had been kept secret until the next morning.

65. PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79-80, letters of the head of the Franciscans at Acre and Guiseppe Blanc; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), June 4, 1775; B1, 1037 (Seyde), letters from French merchants of Acre of June 16, included in report of June 25; B1, 93 (Alepp), extracts of letters written from Acre June 24, 1775. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, report of July 3, 1775, includes an appended note that gives assurances Muhammad Bey died a natural death. Yet some reports, none of which were eyewitness accounts of the events in Acre, mention the possibility of poison. See PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 64, July 3, 1775; SP 110, Box 43, p. 455, Aleppo, June 26, 1775; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), June 4, 1775, in which Boyer notes he died of natural causes but mentions the rumor of poison.

June 11 the harbor of Acre was deserted of ships. Whatever had not been standing on board was simply left behind, including cannons, provisions, and the wounded, who were pillaged and massacred, first by the Maghribi troops who deserted, then by Shaykh Dahir's forces who returned on the 12th.⁶⁶ Murad foresaw that the army would disintegrate in confusion and animosity following the death of its leader and knew full well that a general scramble for Muhammad Bey's possessions and for the succession was about to begin in Cairo. He therefore led the army, minus the Maghribis, out of Acre the morning of June 11 and after a forced march arrived in Cairo the evening of June 24.⁶⁷ The second Egyptian campaign in Syria therefore disintegrated in unexpected and total confusion after it had achieved all its immediate objectives, just as the successful first campaign had done in 1771.

The Egyptian invasion had dealt a staggering blow to Shaykh Dahir al-'Umar's regime so that the octogenarian patriarch was unable to re-establish his control over the several provinces he had lost to Muhammad Bey. Ottoman forces, which had stood aside to observe the struggle between the protagonists, now intervened against the weakened leader. The Qapudan Pasha occupied points along the coast and Muhammad Pasha al-'Azmi, the new ruler of Damascus, sent troops to occupy Sidon before Dahir could recover it himself. Dahir's strength had been almost entirely drained by the Egyptian attack and he found it impossible to reclaim the territories from which he had recently been driven. He was forced to abandon Acre itself and was cut down in August, 1775. His severed head was forwarded to Istanbul by the Qapudan Pasha as formal evidence of the elimination of one of the sultan's most tenacious and persistent rebels.⁶⁸

Incredibly, through the astute manipulation of forces not even under its control, and without using its own meager military resources, the Ottoman government had eliminated, in the space of only two and a half years, three of the most dangerous rebels it had faced in the Arab provinces in the eighteenth century and had regained a semblance of control over provinces that had been virtually autonomous. Egypt was no longer a threat to invade Syria, for the powerful bayt put together by

66. AN, B1, 1037 (Seyde), a review of events of May 20 to June 15, 1775; PRO, SP 97, Box 51, 79-80, letters of head of the Franciscans in Acre and Guiseppe Blanc.

67. Ibid.; Jabarti, I, 414; AN, B1, 111 (Alexandrie), in which Boyer claimed Murad made it back to Cairo by June 22.

68. AAE (Correspondance Politique—Turquie), Vol. 161, October 28, 1775; Cohen, *Palestine in the 18th Century*, 50.

Muhammad Bey disintegrated in factional strife after his death. Although the Ottomans could not regain military or administrative control of Egypt, even with the sending of an expeditionary force in 1786, they were able to force the Qazdughli amirs to perform most of their military and financial obligations to the empire for the greater part of the period before the Napoleonic invasion of 1798. They did succeed in reimposing their discipline over the provinces which Dahir had lost and once more enjoyed the revenues of those territories. The Ottoman Empire displayed amazing resilience in the face of numerous challenges posed by the rise of independent-minded provincial leaders in the second half of the eighteenth century. It demonstrated a brilliant finesse in using the delicate political leverage remaining to it in its provinces to pit one rival against the other and thus eliminate its enemies without the expenditure of its own insufficient military resources. But in reviewing the history of the drive by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey for autonomy it should not be overlooked that the empire had enjoyed an incredible amount of good luck in Muhammad Bey's totally unexpected death just at the moment when he was in an unchallenged position to establish an autonomous regime in both Egypt and Palestine.

Conclusion

The assumption that Napoleon's invasion of 1798 suddenly opened a new era in Egyptian history has riveted attention for too long upon the subsequent development of Egypt under Muhammad 'Ali Pasha and seriously retarded research into the earlier period. The lack of research into the mamluk-Ottoman centuries (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) has left us with a largely negative image of that period of Egyptian history, for the centuries between the conquest of Sultan Selim in 1517 and the arrival of Napoleon are usually portrayed as being intellectually, economically, and socially stagnant. In Ottoman as well as Egyptian historiography the eighteenth century in particular has been viewed as an uninterrupted period of accelerated decline in virtually all fields. Little appreciation has been shown for the positive aspects of growth during the eighteenth century, so it is no surprise that the considerable contributions of the Qazdughli amirs 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab to Egypt's revival have remained largely unnoticed. Their accomplishments, like their tombs, remain largely forgotten. The mighty 'Ali Bey, for instance, is interred in a small and inconspicuous tomb alongside his master Ibrahim Katkhuda and his kushdash Isma'il Bey in the Qarafah al-Sughra. Muhammad Bey was only rescued from a similar interment by the intercession of Shaykh 'Ali al-Sa'idi, who insisted that the body of Abu al-Dhahab be buried in the collegiate-mosque he had just constructed. But even there, on the edge of the bustling Khan al-Khalili, he remains neglected, a virtually forgotten figure. His tomb, partly hidden behind a partition in the corner of the mosque facing the main gate of al-Azhar, lies next to that of his sister Zulaykha, the wife of Ibrahim Bey, and is marked by a simple column carved with the following inscription.

This is the grave (*maqam*) of the mighty one of Egypt,¹ its amir, the most prominent of the great ones, supreme and master, that is, Abu al-Dhahab, in whose time countries were obedient to his hand. His good deeds are rewarded forever through the lessons in learning and the construction of mosques. Then the bounteous clouds of mercy are always accompanied by satisfaction, pouring on him God's pleasure in the evening and the morning. And the houries of his final resting place have recorded that "The abode of nobility is a resting place for Muhammad." ²

The simple tombs of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey are in stark contrast with the majestic burial chambers of the mamluk sultans from the pre-Ottoman period and in no way represent the power they wielded during their lifetimes nor the significant place they hold in modern Egyptian history.

Throughout this study the mashyakhahs of 'Ali Bey (1760-1766; 1767-1772) and Muhammad Bey (1772-1775) have been viewed as a single period of Qazdughli aggrandizement that brought about significant changes within the traditional administrative and military elites and initiated a period of radical new foreign policy objectives. Most of these programs, both domestic and foreign, had been initiated by 'Ali Bey, whose bold policies are associated with the fateful rise of the Qazdughli bayt to an unchallenged leadership of the mamluk and Ottoman structures in Egypt. Muhammad Bey proceeded to embrace the majority of these programs.

The key to the Qazdughli success was 'Ali Bey's determination to overturn the traditional military balance among mamluks, Ottoman

1. Holt (*Egypt and the Fertile Crescent*, 96) notes that "the mighty one of Egypt," or *'aziz misr*, was the title of ancient pharaohs. He finds significance in the fact that this title appeared in an inscription that 'Ali Bey placed in the dome of the mosque of Imam al-Shafi'i which he had repaired. We find it once again on the tombstone of Muhammad Bey, but its significance is not immediately apparent.

2. The final line of this inscription reads in Arabic "Dār al-Karāmah maskin li Muḥammad." When one assigns the usual numerical value to the letters as they appear in Arabic, remembering to disregard the vowels with the exception of long alifs, one finds that the total of the last line adds up to 1189, the hijrah year of Muhammad Bey's death. The addition is as follows.

d = 4	t marbūṭa = 400
a = 1	s = 60
4 = 200	n = 50
l = 30	h = 8
k = 20	m = 40

D	A	R	A	L	K	R	A	M	T	M	S	K	N													
4	+	1	+	200	+	1	+	30	+	20	+	200	+	1	+	40	+	400	+	40	+	60	+	20	+	50
L		M		Ḥ		M		D																		
+	30	+	40	+	8	+	40	+	4	=	1189															

See Hasan 'Abd al-Wahhab, *Tarikh al-Masajid al-Athariyah* (Cairo: 1946), I, 355.

regimental units, and bedouins. 'Ali Bey overwhelmed his many rivals with the largest personal bayt, composed not only of mamluks but also of mercenaries, seen for centuries and pursued his enemies with a ruthlessness and purpose unknown in his day. For centuries a military balance among mamluks, Ottomans, and bedouins had permitted the Ottoman central government to maintain a tenuous control over the Egyptian vilayet, but once 'Ali Bey destroyed that balance through the elimination of his rivals Ottoman control was quickly ended. Beginning in 1768 'Ali Bey simultaneously attacked his rivals in the beylicate and among the Ottoman ojaqs. Through treachery and cunning 'Ali Bey either murdered his many rivals or drove them from the province. In 1769 he completed his drive for absolute authority by sending Muhammad Bey to the Sa'id, where his mamluk broke the power of the Hawwara bedouins over that region. 'Ali Bey was therefore the first mamluk since the Ottoman conquest of 1517 to have unchallenged military control over the entire Egyptian vilayet. Once free of the threat of military intervention, the Qazdughli amirs proceeded to take control of the Ottoman administrative system in Egypt and the vast revenues that it managed. The enfeeblement of the Ottoman military units was completed, for instance, when 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey and their successors acquired control of the many iltizams, particularly those of the ports, which for almost a century had been managed by the officers of the Mustahfizan and 'Azaban units. The elimination of the ojaqs as an effective political-military check to mamluk aspirations was one of the most significant achievements of Qazdughli policy, for it removed the major obstacle to the extension of mamluk control of the administrative and financial system of Ottoman Egypt and to the emergence of an autonomous regime in that province.

'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey centralized authority to a degree unknown in eighteenth-century Egypt. By placing their own trusted mamluks into virtually all the important executive positions of the Ottoman administration they were able to gain an unchallenged control over the financial and administrative affairs of that province. 'Ali Bey's most innovative move in this area was to drive the sultan's governor from Egypt and assume the full executive responsibilities of the qa'immaqam. Using the executive authority vested in this office, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey were in complete control of the Ottoman administration and even issued firmans in their own names. Although Muhammad Bey gave up the position of qa'immaqam to his own mamluk, Ibrahim Bey, and accepted the presence of an Ottoman

governor in Cairo, there were few restraints on his executive authority. So great had his power become that on the eve of his death he was himself appointed governor of Egypt with the rank of three tails and was given as *iltizam* the districts of Ghazza and Ramla in southern Palestine. 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey both therefore combined the military leadership of a triumphant beylicate with the full executive authority of the Ottoman administration. Almost half a century before Muhammad 'Ali Pasha had secured such uncontested power 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey combined an absolute military dominance of Egypt with the executive authority to raise taxes, to dispense revenues of the Ottoman provincial government for their own purposes, to acquire an ever firmer control of the system of urban and agricultural *iltizams*, and to derive profits from the regulation of Egypt's foreign and domestic trade. Only 'Ali Bey's dramatic expulsion from Egypt and Muhammad Bey's unexpected death prevented them from using the authority they had acquired to carry on those policies which are associated with Egypt's revival in the nineteenth century.

It is somewhat misleading to speak of 'Ali Bey's "revolt" against the Ottoman Empire and the rehabilitation of Ottoman authority under Muhammad Bey, for the presence of an Ottoman governor in Egypt during the *mashyakhah* of Muhammad Bey in no way hindered the Qazdughli drive for control of the province. Muhammad Bey enjoyed the same degree of autonomy as his master, but achieved it without placing himself in open revolt against the sultan. The relationship between the province under Qazdughli direction and the empire was as confusing to contemporary observers as to later historians, for in trying to explain the relationship between Egypt and the central government George Baldwin admitted:

I am puzzled to define its government. Who has ever defined it? It is neither a dependent, nor independent state, yet, is nominally subject to the Ottoman Yoke, and virtually independent. . . . The Basha is merely the representative of the Sovereign; the mere Pageant of Authority. His power extends to none of the executive functions of the state.³

In laying the foundations for the despotism and autonomy that were to characterize the regimes of Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey also disrupted the traditional patterns of relationships among several of the social groups in Egypt. Ottomans

3. George Baldwin, Secret Memorial entitled "Speculation on the Situation and Resources of Egypt," India Office, Factory Records, G/17/5 (Egypt and the Red Sea), 1773-1785.

and ~~ejalqs~~, for instance, lost their political and social significance when they lost their remaining hold over the iltizam system. 'Ali Bey's extortions hit all communities, whether indigenous Muslim or foreign Christian, with a good deal of severity, but no community suffered as much from his campaign of extortion and murder as the group of Jewish customs agents whose long-established monopoly over the most important customs houses in Egypt was broken by 'Ali Bey. The leading Jewish customs agents were extorted of vast sums, then murdered, their places being given to a newly arrived group of Syrian Christian merchants whom 'Ali Bey favored.

The stability established by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey is mentioned by virtually all contemporary sources as one of the major positive achievements of their regimes. Once established, their mash-yakhahs appear to be a brief period of calm and orderly government surrounded by the chaos of the mamluk-Ottoman conflicts of the first half of the eighteenth century and the despotism that marked the rule of the duumvirs Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey in the last quarter of the century. It was 'Ali Bey who first imposed order upon Egypt and restrained the numerous officials who had been accustomed to impose their own extortions upon a helpless public. 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey were able to bring an unusual degree of discipline to their regimes and have their orders executed with dispatch by their subordinates. Their authority emanated from the capital to all parts of Upper Egypt and the delta region. Both beys extended their protection to the foreign merchant communities and went so far as to punish their own officers for acts of injustice done to the foreigners. These changes were greatly appreciated by the Europeans, who responded by significantly increasing their commercial activities in Egypt during this period.

As early as 1768 the Venetian and French consuls remarked on the improved security for which 'Ali Bey was responsible. Rigo, the Venetian consul, noted that 'Ali Bey

has been able to direct himself very well, and the city has not lost any of its tranquillity. . . . The loss of 'Ali Bey would truly cause disorder in Egypt, since it is rare in this country that a man is able to unite absolute power in himself and create a system of government the most regulated and the most just.

The French consul D'Amirat wrote a few months later:

The despotism of 'Ali Bey is certainly dangerous; there is, however, less to fear from him than the horrors and confusion of anarchy which

would follow his death. There is everything to fear that all the disorders which followed the death of Ibrahim Kiaya Kasdarli (Katkhuda Qazdughli) return at this time.⁴

This security prevailed throughout the mashyakhah of Muhammad Bey, but civil war and tyranny returned to plague the populace for more than a generation after his untimely death.

It should be emphasized that neither 'Ali Bey nor Muhammad Bey brought about any significant structural change to the administrative or military structures of the province. No effort was made by either mamluk to change the iltizam system or the composition of the mamluk army. Both these tasks were left to Muhammad 'Ali Pasha in the nineteenth century. The Qazdughli leaders gained significantly larger sums from the traditional revenue system by imposing the discipline of a single bayt over the vast iltizam system and their control of the administration permitted them to divert funds destined for the Ottoman government or its responsibilities to their own purposes. 'Ali Bey gained substantial sums, for instance, by withholding the annual payments Egypt was required to send to Istanbul and the holy cities, but these increased revenues at the disposal of the Qazdughli bayt were never enough to pay for the series of domestic and foreign wars the Qazdughli beys fought between 1769 and 1775. Because the traditional revenue-producing system, left unchanged by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey, could not deliver the increased sums they required to pay for their bold new programs, both leaders resorted to extralegal methods to supplement the income from traditional sources.

Native rivals were frequently exiled, extorted of their property, and murdered to satisfy the Qazdughli demands for increased income. Extraordinary taxes were also imposed upon the villages and the various social groups, such as religious minorities, merchants, and artisans, of the urban centers. The foreign merchants, too, were forced to contribute to the Qazdughli war effort. Such calls for additional payments were not unusual, for previous mamluk regimes had raised additional revenues in this way, but the frequency of the demands and the exorbitant sums demanded by the Qazdughli amirs represented a significant departure from tradition. These extortions became more frequent and more severe as the Qazdughli wars unfolded. Much of the good will created by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey among the foreign and minority merchant communities was dissipated by the

4. Cited by Livingstone, " 'Ali Bey al-Kabir and the Mamluk Resurgence in Ottoman Egypt," 89.

frequent extortions demanded of them. The beys did not seem to understand the paradox of granting their protection to the merchants and giving them encouragement to increase the volume of their trade in their domains and at the same time imposing cruel and crippling avanies upon them. The volume of European trade in Egypt increased considerably in response to the policies of the two Qazdughli amirs, and the avanies represented only a small proportion of the profits the merchant houses derived from their trade, yet many European firms were nevertheless driven into bankruptcy by the extortions of the beys. This only strengthened the determination of the European governments to maintain their relations with the central government and not take the risk of developing close political and economic ties with a mamluk regime characterized by political instability and tyranny.

~~The Qazdughli amirs fought their wars in the medieval manner, assembling contingents of various national, religious or ethnic groups—mamluk, Maghribi, bedouin, Druze, Christian, Shi'ite—who seldom fought together as a coherent body for any length of time. Despite the many problems inherent in such a force 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey demonstrated unusual skill in assembling armies of considerable size. They maneuvered these armies and their equipment to distant provinces and easily overcame their enemies. Their only concessions to modernization, however, were the employment of a handful of European artillerymen and the purchase of small quantities of European weaponry, mostly cannons. But they established a precedent, for thereafter European officers are to be found in all successive Qazdughli armies and, of course, in the armies of Muḥammad 'Ali Pasha. But the mamluk bayt, with all its inherent tensions that impelled it toward fragmentation and self-destruction, remained both the basic political unit of the regime and the core of the Qazdughli armies. The Qazdughli amirs were men of their age. The transformation of the administrative and military institutions of society was far too radical an idea to have even been contemplated in this period which falls before the American and French revolutions. Egypt would remain, therefore, a traditional Ottoman province until Muhammad 'Ali Pasha transformed its political, administrative, and military institutions a half century later.~~

/ Between them 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey gave momentum to the rise of the powerful centralized regime that was to emerge in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although they had not entirely

eliminated Ottoman influence in Egypt with the same finality as would Muhammad 'Ali Pasha, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had so enfeebled the Ottoman military institutions and gained so firm a hold of Egypt's financial system that not even the Ottoman expedition of 1786 could successfully wrest control of the province from the Qazdughli bayt.

If they failed to achieve any of their bold foreign policy objectives, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey succeeded in transforming the character of Egypt's relations with the Ottoman central government and with the European states. Their mashyakhahs therefore mark the beginning of a new era in Egypt's foreign relations. Syria was not attached to the beylicate of Egypt, mamluk power was not extended along the Red Sea coasts, Egypt did not secure uncontested autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, and the expected benefits flowing from an increased European trade did not materialize, but the two amirs nevertheless regained for Egypt an international importance that it has not surrendered to this day.

The province achieved a de facto if not a de jure autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, and an entirely new range of relations with several European states was developed. The Qazdughli encouragement to the Europeans, particularly the English, to bring their ships directly to Suez and their support of the Venetian and French merchants trading in Egypt's Mediterranean ports focused European attention on the strategic and economic value of Egypt at the very time that European imperialism was developing global interests. Egypt once more began to acquire a central importance as the major point of transit between Asia and Europe and would within a few decades be considered the vital key to India.

That the plans 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had for increasing the level of European trade through Egypt did not succeed can be laid to their own shortsightedness, to the instability of the mamluk regime in general and the despotism and tyranny of their immediate successors, and to Europe's unwillingness, at that time, to rearrange the economic and political balance of power in the eastern Mediterranean that Egypt's drive for autonomy would have entailed. The Qazdughli amirs did not understand the effect of their frequent extortions upon the psychology of the foreign merchant community, nor did they appreciate the need to establish complete political stability and political protection for the merchants. So chaotic were affairs in Egypt after the death of Muhammad Bey that the French abandoned their

diplomatic post in Cairo in 1777, and the English saw the ships they sent to Suez in 1779 plundered by the beys. The attempt to reopen the Red Sea route to European shipping would have entailed, particularly on the part of the British, considerable rearranging of existing economic alignments and political alliances. Whereas the Ottoman central government remained unalterably opposed to the scheme, the European nations would have jeopardized the position of their merchants in the rest of the Ottoman Empire if they had ignored the Ottoman ban. The profits from the trade could not have offset the losses the Europeans would have experienced in other parts of the empire.

Perhaps the major reason the governments of France and England failed to respond favorably to the invitations of the Qazdughli amirs and to the appeals of their own merchants to open the Red Sea route was their consideration for the balance of power in Europe. Each had already become concerned by the Hapsburg and Russian drives into eastern Europe and had already committed themselves to policies that supported the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the power of the central government in its struggle with its numerous rebellious pashas. Both European governments felt that any small gains it might make in the area of the Red Sea would be taken as a pretext by the Russians and Hapsburgs for their further penetration into the eastern European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Neither government, therefore, responded to the overtures of friendship 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey made to the European powers. The British were also unwilling to have the East India Company intrude into an area for which the Levant Company held a monopoly and so rejected the two treaties James Bruce and Warren Hastings signed with Muhammad Bey. Despite these setbacks to their specific policies, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had made a fundamental contribution to Egypt's future modernization by opening Egypt to European influence after that province had been virtually isolated from Europe for several centuries.

In inviting the European merchants to expand their activities in Egypt and in hiring European officers to modernize their artillery corps 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey at least partly abandoned some of the traditional Middle Eastern attitudes toward the despised infidel. The heavy restrictions under which Europeans lived in Egypt, the frequent molestations or illegal arrests, the continuous insults and tyrannies imposed on Europeans, the need to seek safety, sometimes for

extended periods, in the relative security of their residences, these and other considerations kept the European resident population in Egypt pitifully small throughout the Middle Ages. The activities of this European community seemed to have had no cultural impact upon any class of the local population. On the contrary, the Europeans had to live as the Egyptians lived, at least in externals, if they were to continue to reside in Egypt.

While not entirely abandoning all the traditional prejudices against the Europeans, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey gave to the European merchants the grudging protection they needed to develop their trade and made significant political concessions to their governments. The beys came to realize, therefore, that there were economic and political advantages to be gained in increasing their dealings with the Europeans. In expanding the range of their contacts with the Europeans the beys had to make a fundamental psychological adjustment in their attitudes toward the previously despised foreigners. 'Ali Bey, for instance, actively sought the military and political aid of several European states, particularly the Czarist Empire, in his struggle against his Ottoman sovereign. Both amirs tried to strengthen their armies by improving their artillery corps through the employment of European officers. Although the attempt was made on a small scale and ended in failure, it nevertheless demanded a new appreciation of the technical skills possessed by the Europeans and a new regard for their value. Thereafter, the use of European military advisers became a regularly accepted practice, as was the case with the government in Istanbul.

One may also observe in the negotiations between Muhammad Bey and the various English representatives with whom he dealt a subtle change in the attitudes of the beys toward the Europeans. James Bruce, George Baldwin, and Warren Hastings were all accorded a new respect by Muhammad Bey, and the treaties signed by Muhammad Bey with these representatives were agreements between equals. A fundamental change in the attitudes toward the Europeans therefore seems to have been made about the time of the mashyakhahs of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey, for Egypt was virtually inundated in the following years by European merchants, explorers, and military officers who, while they still were restricted in their movements and sometimes were subjected to some of the tyrannies mentioned above, were nevertheless able to go about their affairs. In doing so they drew Egypt ever more surely into closer commercial, political, and cultural

contact with Europe. A significant turning point in the relations between Egypt and Europe therefore seems to have been reached, despite the failure of the Qazdughli amirs to achieve their specific foreign policy objectives.

The mashyakhahs of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey must be viewed as a single period of Qazdughli aggrandizement, for Muhammad Bey faithfully followed the many domestic and foreign policies first elaborated by his master and brother-in-law. The personal conflict that erupted between the two and the transfer of power from 'Ali Bey to Muhammad Bey barely affected the Qazdughli drive for power. It is only in the mood or character of the two regimes, not in their policy goals, that one can find a difference. While 'Ali Bey continued to support the religious establishment, as his Qazdughli predecessors had done, his relations with the ulama seem strained. There is no doubt that Jabarti, one of the few contemporary Arab sources to be familiar with his life and work in Egypt, preferred Muhammad Bey to all the Qazdughli amirs with whom he was personally acquainted. One must remember the religious values which permeated the age, and which guided the life of the historian himself, in evaluating this sympathetic summation of Muhammad Bey's character and career in his obituary notice.

In sum, Muhammad Bey was the last amir in whom we find the energy, the severity, and the great qualities that deserve respect and admiration. He loved to do good. He liked the ulama and the people of good conduct. He respected them. He would make magnificent donations for them. He hated the impious and he would never act to throw doubt on their honor or their religious sentiments. In physique Muhammad Bey was of medium height, very well made, and had a very good physique. His complexion was white, his beard gray, and he had an imposing aspect. He was very jealous of his dignity, spoke only rarely, was reserved in his daily habits, and made only infrequent motions. He was very courageous. It suffices to say that his courage has no equal except his prudence. He conducted and personally studied the affairs of state and fatigue never caused his vigilance to sleep. The massacre of the inhabitants of Yaffa, ordered by him on the advice of his lieutenants, was a blamable act. Without this cruelty, his good deeds were far more numerous than his bad ones.⁵

Hardly had the body of the deceased founder of the bayt muhammadi been put to rest than his surviving amirs began the struggle for the succession. In the process they contested the distribution of his vast properties and possessions and violated the sacred waqf which he had encumbered "for all eternity." The

5. Jabarti, I, 419-420.

despoilation of Muhammad Bey's waqf by his own amirs brings to a symbolic close the brief period of internal stability established by 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey and marks the beginning of one of Egypt's more lawless and unsettled eras.

Jabarti notes that Muhammad Bey was the last of Egypt's rulers to respect the ulama, to accept their advice in his councils, and to give generously to their institutions. His own attitudes were so thoroughly shaped by traditional religious values and his activities so beneficial and pleasing to the ulama that his mashyakhah can be said to have closely approached the ideal form which the ulama envisioned in their classical theories of government. His collegiate-mosque is not only a living expression of his generous support of the ulama and their devotional and educational activities, but stands as the last monument of an age in which the men of the sword were united in values, attitudes, and spirit with the men of the pen and when the government, of which the ulama were an integral part, engaged in activities supportive of religion and its moral principles. A sharp break in this mutually beneficial relationship between the ulama and the amirs occurred after Muhammad Bey's death, for his own mamluks barely tolerated the continued presence of the ulama in their divans, frequently intervened in their private affairs to their own advantage, usurped the revenues of the awqaf established for their institutions and activities, and departed from accepted standards of morality and justice. Ibrahim Bey and Murad Bey loosened many of the traditional ties between the military elite and the ulama that were still characteristic of Muhammad Bey's mashyakhah, then Muhammad 'Ali Pasha completed the estrangement between the two groups by expelling the ulama from his councils.

In the brief span of a single decade, therefore, 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had broken the hold of the Ottoman Empire over the military, financial, and bureaucratic institutions of Egypt, had unsettled the traditional equilibrium among social groups in Egypt, had loosened the hold the former ruling elites had maintained over the revenues of the province, had laid down the broad outlines of a foreign policy that would be carried forward by successive regimes for almost a century, and had established the first meaningful contacts with modern Europe. Following the mashyakhah of Muhammad Bey the rhythm of European contacts with Egypt, whether through travellers in search of adventure, churchmen in search of lost souls, merchants in search of profits, or diplomats and military men, quickened

dramatically, and led inexorably to invasion by both the French and the British at the end of the century. Napoleon did not dramatically "open" an isolated Egypt to the West, nor was Muhammad 'Ali Pasha the originator of the policies responsible for Egypt's transformation. In retrospect, the dramatic turning point in the contacts between the two civilizations had occurred in the period 1760-1775, that is, in the period of 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey Abu al-Dhahab. The relationship between Egypt and the West was fundamentally different in 1775 from what it had been in 1760. Clearly, the change was largely the work of the two Qazdughli amirs who governed Egypt during this period.

The achievements and policies of the two Qazdughli amirs did not lead immediately to Egypt's modernization in the eighteenth century. They had destroyed the political foundation of the old order, but had been unable to substitute anything fundamentally new to replace the political system they had disrupted. Several factors stand out. Neither 'Ali Bey nor Muhammad Bey survived in power long enough to undertake the transformation of the political and economic systems. Muhammad 'Ali Pasha likewise accomplished little in the first five years of his reign, a period that was already longer than either 'Ali Bey or Muhammad Bey had allotted to them. Although they had centralized control over the economy to an unusual degree and clearly heralded Muhammad 'Ali in this regard, they sought to derive increased revenues from the traditional revenue-producing system without radically transforming it, as Muhammad 'Ali was to do. In the political and military sphere the Qazdughli amirs were also unable to complete the revolution they had begun. They successfully eliminated Ottoman control from Egypt, but were unable to overcome the fundamental ~~weaknesses of the traditional mamluk~~ system. Without any external enemies able to bring about his downfall, 'Ali Bey nevertheless succumbed to the traditional mamluk weakness of division within the bayt. And following the death of Muhammad Bey the regime split into competing factions, thereby nullifying the considerable advantage the mamluks held over the Ottomans by their control of the administration. Perhaps the most important single difference between Muhammad 'Ali Pasha and the Qazdughli amirs in their drive for power was the former's successful transformation of the base of his military power. Until the disruption of the mamluk system by Napoleon and its ultimate elimination by Muhammad 'Ali Pasha the Qazdughli amirs had given no thought to eliminating the mamluk army

and thereby overcoming its numerous weaknesses. 'Ali Bey and Muhammad Bey had therefore disrupted the traditional system, but had been unable to replace it with anything radically new. Egypt remained, therefore, a traditional Middle Eastern province, but one that was already caught up in the web of Europe's expanding political systems.

Glossary

<i>Abū Tāqā riyāl</i>	Egyptian term for the German <i>Reichsthaler</i> or <i>Thaler</i> . See <i>pataque</i> .
<i>aghā</i> (pl. <i>aghāwāt</i>)	Officer rank in the Ottoman military hierarchy; head of the corps.
<i>akh</i> (pl. <i>ikhwān</i>)	In this study, brothers in slavery; slaves having the same master. See <i>kushdāsh</i> .
' <i>ālim</i>	See ' <i>ulamā</i> '.
<i>amīn al-bahrayn</i>	<i>Multazim</i> of the two Nile quays of Cairo at Bulaq and Old Cairo.
<i>amīr</i> (pl. <i>umarā'</i>)	Prince; commander; a high mamluk rank. See <i>sanjaq bey</i> .
<i>amīr al-hajj</i>	Commander of the annual pilgrim caravan sent from Cairo to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina; the office was usually entrusted to one of the more powerful military commanders among the mamluks. See <i>mīr al-liwā'</i> .
<i>amīr al-liwā'</i>	Commander of Cairo.
<i>amīr Miṣr</i>	See <i>tābi'</i> .
<i>atbā'</i>	Forced gift, extortion. See <i>bakhshīsh</i> .
<i>avanie</i> (French)	See <i>waqf</i> .
<i>awqāf</i>	"Gift," or required payment; extortion. See <i>avanie</i> .
<i>bakhshīsh</i> (Persian/Arabic)	See <i>pāshā</i> .
<i>bāshā</i>	Mamluk "house"; configuration of military, political, and administrative power defined by common allegiance to a single leader. A mamluk <i>bayt</i> included three clearly defined groups of adherents, the personal slaves (whether slave or manumitted) of the head of the <i>bayt</i> , the leader's <i>ikhwān</i> or <i>kushdāshīyah</i> , and followers (<i>atbā'</i>).
<i>bayt</i> (pl. <i>buyūt</i>)	See <i>sanjaq bey</i> .
<i>bey</i>	Keeper of the registers; treasurer.
<i>defterdar</i> (Arabic, <i>daftardār</i>)	Assemblage; council.
<i>divan</i> (Arabic, <i>dīwān</i>)	The High, or Grand Council, the loosely defined body of high Ottoman dignitaries, including representatives of the judicial, administrative and military branches, making up the Ottoman governing council in Egypt.
<i>al-Dīwān al-'Ālī</i>	

fallāḥ (pl. *fallāḥīn*)
fatwā (Turkish *fetva*)

Egyptian peasant.
 Opinion on Islamic law or tradition rendered by a *muftī*. It does not have binding force in a court, but a favorable *fatwā* is essential before certain actions are undertaken. These include the declaration of someone as a rebel, the execution of a criminal, or the deposition of a ruler or governor.

firmān

Imperial order or decree giving specific instructions or granting specific privileges to the individual or group to whom it is sent.

ḥikr

Lease of *waqf* property (for a period up to 99 lunar years) in consideration of a large down payment and smaller annual rents.

ḥulvan (Arabic, *ḥulwān*)

Payment one made to the government to secure the right to succeed to the privileges of someone recently deceased, hence it is often referred to as "death dues." But it also was paid by anyone assuming the rights (usually in an *iltizām*) of someone who had not necessarily died, but who had lost control of those rights through deposition from office or an unfavorable turn of political events.

ikhwān

iltizām

See *akh* or *kushdāsh*.

"Tax farm," whether in the form of agricultural land, urban real estate, or an economic activity. The holder (*multazim*) of the contract designated to collect the revenues kept a portion of the taxes for himself after delivering a previously agreed upon sum (the price of his *iltizām*) to the state.

iqṭā' (pl. *iqṭā'āt*)
 (Turkish/Arabic)

irsālīyah

Preferred Ottoman terminology for the Arabic *iltizām*.

isqāt

kāshif

Remittance, the sum Egypt was required to forward annually to Istanbul.

Relinquishing of legal rights.

Immediate subordinate officers of mamluk *amīrs*, usually sent as provincial governors to supervise their master's *iltizāms*. They are therefore often referred to as provincial governors.

katkhudā (Persian)

Steward or executive assistant of an important *amīr* or official; he enjoyed some of the executive authority of his superior.

khān

Large commercial establishment, usually built around a central courtyard, having facilities for storage of goods and housing of traveling merchants while they disposed of their merchandise. By the eighteenth century the term had become interchangeable with *qayṣarīyah* and *wikālah*.

khāzandār

Treasurer; one of the higher ranks given to mamluks within the household of the master.

kīs

kushdāsh (pl. *kushdāshīyah*)

Purse, 25,000 *niṣf fidḍahs* or *pārās*.

Term signifying common bondage to a single master; mamluks (whether slave or manumitted) having a common master. See *akh*.

<i>madrasah</i> (pl. <i>madāris</i>)	Institution providing the highest form of education in the traditional Islamic world. Instruction was generally given in the mosque, not in a building of its own. The functions of worship and study intermingled in the same building, hence the reference to collegiate-mosque.
<i>maison</i>	French company or establishment; also the building, usually a <i>khān</i> , in which the company carried on business and where its merchants resided.
<i>mamlūk</i> (pl. <i>mamālīk</i>)	Military slave; a collection of imported slaves who formed the military aristocracy in Egypt from the thirteenth to the early nineteenth century.
<i>mashyakhah</i>	Office, or dignity, of a shaykh; leadership, directorship.
<i>mīr al-liwā'</i> (<i>amīr al-liwā'</i> <i>al-sharīf al-sulṭānī</i>)	Commander of the sultan's noble banner; a <i>sanjaq bey</i> ; a district Ottoman military commander. See <i>sanjaq bey</i> .
<i>miṣr</i>	Arabic term by which both the province of Egypt and the city of Cairo were known.
<i>muḥtasib</i>	Government official charged with the general supervision of the everyday affairs of the marketplace and public morality.
<i>muftī</i>	' <i>ālim</i> whose education and renown permit him to offer legal opinions on points of Islamic law.
<i>multazim</i>	"Tax farmer"; holder of the right to supervise the collection of revenues from an <i>iltizām</i> .
<i>muqaṭṭa'ajī</i>	Preferred Ottoman terminology for a <i>multazim</i> ; one holding the right to collect the taxes from an <i>iqta</i> .
<i>nazar</i> , <i>niṣārah</i>	Administration or supervision; in this study reference is usually to the supervision of <i>awqāf</i> .
<i>niṣf fiḍḍah</i>	Arabic version of the Ottoman <i>pārā</i> and preferred in <i>waqf</i> documents of Egypt in the eighteenth century. Forty <i>niṣf fiḍḍah</i> equaled 1 piaster.
<i>ojāq</i> (pl. <i>ojāqāt</i>)	Basic Ottoman military unit. The Ottoman forces in Egypt were divided into seven <i>ojāqāt</i> , each having a specific military function to perform.
<i>pārā</i>	Basic Ottoman monetary unit. Forty <i>pārās</i> were equivalent to 1 piaster. See <i>niṣf fiḍḍah</i> .
<i>pāshā</i> (pl. <i>pāshāwāt</i>); (Arabic <i>bāshā</i>)	Highest Ottoman military-administrative rank in the Ottoman Empire; the head of a <i>pāshālik</i> , or province. Interchangeable with <i>wālī</i> , governor.
<i>pataque</i> (French)	Corruption of <i>Abū Tāqā</i> , equivalent to 90 <i>pārās</i> or <i>niṣf fiḍḍahs</i> .
<i>qāḍī</i> (pl. <i>quḍāh</i>)	Judge in the shari'ah court system.
<i>qāḍī al-quḍāh</i>	Chief judge of an Ottoman judicial district.
<i>qā'immaqām</i>	Officer at various levels of government who exercised the functions of his superior in the latter's absence. The <i>qā'immaqām</i> referred to in this study exercised the powers of the governor in the latter's absence. The <i>qā'immaqām</i> was, in a sense, the second most important Ottoman official in Egypt. Qāzdughlī <i>amīrs</i> seized this office and exercised the

<i>qayṣarīyah</i>	executive powers of the Ottoman governors whenever they deposed or exiled the <i>pāshā</i> . Large commercial building built around a central courtyard and having space for storage, shops and rooms for the merchants. By the eighteenth century the term had become interchangeable with <i>khān</i> and <i>wikālah</i> .
<i>Qāzdughlīyah</i>	Mamluk <i>bayt</i> that dominated Egypt throughout most of the eighteenth century.
<i>quḍāh</i> <i>sanjaq bey</i> , or <i>bey</i>	See <i>qādī</i> . District commander in the Ottoman military-administrative hierarchy. By the second half of the eighteenth century mamluk <i>amīrs</i> had acquired most of these positions in Egypt for themselves, hence the mamluk term <i>amīr</i> and the Ottoman term <i>bey</i> were often interchangeable. Not all mamluk <i>amīrs</i> were <i>beys</i> , however. A council of 24 <i>beys</i> formed the top of the mamluk hierarchy in Egypt. See <i>mīr al-liwā'</i> .
<i>sharī'ah</i> <i>shaykh</i>	Sacred law of Islam. Has three basic meanings in Arabic; an old man (a term of respect); the leader, head, of a tribe or other group; a man of religious training, synonymous with <i>'ālim</i> .
<i>shaykh al-balad</i>	Title recognized by the Ottoman government in the eighteenth century to designate the mamluk <i>bey</i> whom the Ottoman government recognized as the head of the mamluk beylicate.
<i>tābi'</i> (pl. <i>atbā'</i>)	Follower; the general term referring to someone who submitted to a more powerful mamluk. By the late eighteenth century the term applied to the owned or manumitted slaves of a mamluk and to those from other <i>buyūt</i> who, after the fracture of their own house, merely attached themselves to the service of a new master.
<i>takiyah</i> (pl. <i>takāyah</i>) (Turkish <i>tekke</i>)	Communal residence where Sufis (Muslim mystics) lived, studied, prayed, and undertook communal ritual.
<i>'ulamā'</i> (sing. <i>'ālim</i>)	Religious scholars of Islam who, through their learning and teaching, sought to perpetuate the traditions of Islam and defend the sacred law.
<i>umarā'</i> <i>vilayet</i> (Arabic <i>wilāyah</i>)	See <i>amīr</i> . Administrative district of the Ottoman Empire governed by a <i>wālī</i> , or <i>pāshā</i> .
<i>wakīl</i> (pl. <i>wukalā'</i>) <i>wālī</i>	Legal agent. Governor of an Ottoman province, or <i>wilāyah</i> (vilayet); the highest Ottoman official in a province. See <i>pāshā</i> .
<i>waqf</i> (pl. <i>awqāf</i>)	Endowed property, usually producing an untaxed income set aside for pious purposes established by the donor.

waqfiyah (pl. *waqfiyāt*)
wikālah
za'im Miṣr

Document establishing a *waqf*.
See *khān* and *qayṣariyah*.
Janissary officer responsible for the police functions
in Cairo; Janissary police chief of Cairo.

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Ministry of Awqāf

Daftarkhānah

Fihrist Taqārīr al-Nazar min Sanat 1181 li Ghāyat Sanat 1190.

Sijill Ḥiṣābāt al-Awqāf al-Khayriyah

Taqārīr al-Nazar

Waqfiyāt

Qism al-Sijillāt al-Ahliyah

Sijillāt al-Awqāf al-Ahliyah

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